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THE WAR IN THE EAST

ROUND the world, from Tangier to Hong Kong, the capitulation of France has shaken the balance of power and opened the way to vast territorial changes. Russia's reoccupation of Bessarabia and part of Bukovina, like all the actions of that Power, has set everyone guessing. Did it involve a defiance of the Axis Powers: did it imply a breach in the understanding between Hitler and Stalin? We should suppose that in principle it was accepted in the talks that resulted in the Russo-German Pact, of August. But it is probable that the Russians consulted only their own interests when they addressed their ultimatum to King Carol. For two reasons they may have chosen a moment inconvenient for Germany. She was reckoning on a rich harvest from this fertile province of wheat, maize and above all soya beans: much of this may now be lost to her. In the second place, it is now harder for her to hold Hungary and Bulgaria in leash, yet it is her policy to postpone their claims to revision until she dictates a final settlement to a subject and unified Europe. The majority of the population of this neglected and misgoverned region, the poorer peasants, workers and Jews, will doubtless gain by its return to Russian rule. In the military sense the operation was speedy and efficient, a fact that confirms the view we took of the Finnish campaign —that the training and equipment of the Red Army are adapted primarily for a war of movement over plains and steppes. Stalin's motive in this acquisition is probably strategical, as it was when he brought the Baltic States into his defensive system. We should not for a moment expect the U.S.S.R. to attack Germany, but a desire to build a defensible frontier, with a deep buffer area, in anticipation of a later German attack may be assumed. But it is not certainly known whether Stalin intends to claim the whole delta of the Danube and even, as some suppose, a stretch of the Black Sea coast beyond it. That would be an injury which Germany could hardly tolerate for long, since it would give Russia control of this great waterway and of the pipeline from the oil-wells. It is all to the good that King Carol in his unsuccessful efforts to win the pity of the Führer and the Duce—a dry spring at any time—renounced the guarantee that Mr. Chamberlain so rashly bestowed upon him.

The Mediterranean position is clearer than it was a week ago. The Turks have used the escape clause in their treaty of alliance with us, though we should not have supposed that any action they might have taken against Italy could have been displeasing to the Russians. They remain, then, armed neutrals, closely linked to Moscow. In Syria General Mittelhauser has proclaimed that resistance is at an end, and his Polish troops have crossed into Palestine. To this the British reply was a declaration taking Syria under British military and naval protection for the duration of the war. That suggests an ugly possibility. What would happen if this big French force sided with Italy against us? The tendency of the French Right, including, too, many of the generals, is to play, absurdly, for a "Latin" combination—Italy, France and Spain against Hitler.

At the western end of the Mediterranean the probability now is that General Nougès will follow General Mittelhauser's example. He will presumably dismantle the naval fortress of Bizerta and uncover the Tunis-Libya frontier. We must assume that Franco's Spain is actively in the enemy camp: it has even welcomed some German troops on "a visit of courtesy" at San Sebastian. That is no longer neutrality. The iron ore of Biscay is lost to us and the U-boats doubtless have what bases they may need for the operations they have now started in the Atlantic. The news of vigorous action to prevent the French fleet falling into Nazi hands comes as an antidote to these gloomy calculations.

What, meanwhile, should be our policy in the Levant? We are holding Egypt, whose King sits on the fence, against half-hearted threats from Libya: we hold Palestine, talk of protecting Syria, police the Canal and wage a minor aerial guerilla war against Abyssinia. These operations suffice for the moment to discourage the Italians, who are taking no risks, and they deny to the enemy a source of oil that might in a long war be vital to him. But it may be urged that it would be better to block the Canal which is now of no use to us, and that Irak could be defended from India. We do not ourselves venture, for lack of detailed knowledge, on a decided opinion, but we are clear that no question of imperial prestige should deter us from with-

drawal if the balance of the military argument should point that way. In the Far East a similar situation and a similar problem confronts us. The Japanese soldiers are said to have decided that every use must be made of the present opportunity. Mr. Arita has responded by proclaiming a cautiously worded Monroe Doctrine over Further Asia and the Pacific. The first Japanese moves were (1) to blockade French Indo-China from the land ; (2) to blockade the leased mainland of Hong Kong ; (3) to threaten the Settlement at Shanghai ; and (4) to demand that we must close the Burma road into nationalist China. Over that last demand the Foreign Office so far procrastinates. The evacuation of British women and children from Hong Kong should have been done long ago ; it may now suggest an intention to defend this indefensible position. The arrival at that island of six American submarines may be a significant and helpful gesture. In this situation we urge : (1) we should bluntly refuse to compromise our own good name as well as our interests by helping Japan to complete the blockade of China. (2) we should not hesitate, if need were, to withdraw from Hong Kong and Tientsin, in order the better to defend what is defensible. But (3) we should seek with America and Russia, singly and jointly, to reach the fullest agreement now possible to resist aggressions by Japan.

Problems of Supply (by an Industrial Correspondent).

There was a good deal of derisive comment in industrial circles when it was announced that Mr. Peter F. Bennett had been given an important position in the Ministry of Aircraft Production. During the great part of his period at the Ministry of Supply, the production of Armoured Fighting Vehicles decreased, and he had finally under considerable public pressure been replaced by Mr. Burton of B.T.H. It is difficult to understand why a business man who has failed in one department should immediately be appointed to another, when there are dozens of capable executives whose assistance could be enlisted. Mr. Bennett is an ex-chairman of the Federation of British Industries and Joint Managing Director of Lucas in Birmingham. He will have as his colleague that gifted journalist, Mr. Beverley Baxter—*Atticus* of the *Sunday Times*—who has been selected to co-ordinate aircraft production.

Evidence of the failure to keep any satisfactory time schedule in supply continues to accumulate. The chief reason for these delays is the unwillingness of Government Departments to look outside the ring of regular firms, and the unwillingness of those regular firms to pass on orders which they know they cannot fulfil in reasonable time. Another obstacle is undoubtedly the Iron and Steel control under Sir Charles Wright. Working without any clear scheme of priorities and often in ignorance of the ultimate consumption of their products, its policy seems too often to consist in allotting steel to old and trusted clients, without considering too closely the urgency of their orders. More serious still is the lack of co-ordination between the various Government ordering agencies of which the Ministry of Supply is only one. This frequently results in a wasteful lack of standardisation. The boots of one Service, for instance, are made on different lasts from those used by another ; machinery of the same kind is not in fact interchangeable from one Service to another. And so on. One section of the Army is short of vehicles, while another has vast unused supplies. Here is work for Arthur Greenwood's Production Committee and further confirmation of our suggestion last week that it needs its own administrative staff if it is really to pull the departments into shape. A more fundamental problem, which vitally concerns Mr. Morrison, is the use for war-production of maintenance and other machinery in non-armament factories. There is a large number of firms up and down the country which have machine-tools and engineers at their disposal, but in too small numbers for large-scale production. One northern factory we know of employs four hundred engineers for maintenance, and there must be hundreds of similar units in the Birmingham and London areas unmobilised for the war-effort. There are two ways of dealing with this problem : either the men and the machine tools are removed to specific armament factories, at cost to the efficiency of the plant, or the employers are encouraged to take the initiative themselves in war production. At Derby the local employers have worked out a scheme of co-operation and pooled their resources and a similar effort has been made at Maidstone. In both cases useful auxiliary work is being done and sub-contracts have been obtained with armament firms, considerably accelerating production. We believe that Mr. Morrison could get remarkable results by a vigorous appeal to firms outside the armament industry, encouraging them to take the initative in working out such schemes for the employment of plant and engineers. But this will only be effective if the inner ring of armament firms is compelled both to release orders they cannot fulfil to schedule and to sub-contract freely for operations which these outside firms can perform. As a last instance there is a demand for scrap iron and a few fences have been taken down. Why not miles more of the useless iron railings of London ? Why not collect the thousands of tons of old iron lying about on farmlands of England ?

The Child-Evacuation Scheme

On Tuesday the House of Commons debated the Government's scheme for child-evacuation overseas. Mr. Shakespeare stated that in the first week 52,000 applications had been received from England and Wales and 14,500 from Scotland. Of the English and Welsh applications roughly three-quarters were from parents of children at grant-aided schools. Mr. Shakespeare made a great point of the Government's determination to ensure that equal facilities were to be provided for all classes, but his later admission that private schemes could and were being pushed through considerably weakened his case. Indeed, as Miss Rathbone pointed out, if wealthy people could evacuate their children privately it was silly to make provision for them under the Government scheme. Nor was Mr. Shakespeare's reply to Lady Astor's assertion that American offers had been cold-shouldered wholely convincing. At present there is no American scheme at all, and the Government does not yet seem to have decided whether child-evacuation is an important measure from a military point of view or no. If it is, then far greater pressure should be used to obtain the necessary shipping. After the example of the *Arandora Star* it is clear that all evacuation ships must be convoyed, and the parents must be assured of this. Perhaps the most depressing feature of the debate was the fact that only one member, Mr. John Parker, had the courage to remind the House of its responsibility for the 10,000 Austrian and German children to whom this country had given shelter from Nazi oppression. We boast of our humanity, yet we give preference to our own children and leave behind in this country those others for whom our treatment of enemy aliens has made home-life almost impossible. Two conclusions may be drawn from the debate. In the first place, if the Government is in earnest with its scheme it should at once take over all the passenger space available and prevent private evacuation by the wealthier classes outside the allotted quota. In the second place, it should ensure that in any American scheme which may be worked out refugee children should be given priority.

The Home Office and the Fifth Column

Though a few more of the more prominent Nazi sympathisers of British extraction have been interned, there is no evidence that the Home Office is resolutely attacking the Fifth Column in this country. The British Union, we learn, has " moved into smaller headquarters," while " the Link " continues to hold private meetings. Part of the trouble may be undoubtedly the liberalism of Home Office officials : they do not want to destroy freedom or give offence to anyone who matters. This means that respectable English men and women are left untouched unless there is overwhelming evidence against them. Even then they are often not interned. More serious is the undoubted fact that " influence " has got some highly suspicious characters out of internment camps and some entirely innocent people into them. What is needed is an understanding of the simple facts, first that such a liberal attitude can be and is being exploited by Nazi agents and secondly that the Fifth Column, on all the available evidence, is nearly always " non-political "—in the sense that it is anti-Socialist—and respectable. If such an understanding is outside the scope of the officials dealing with the job, then they must be replaced or aided by others. If our Secret Service is still searching for Anarchists and Communists it is only wasting its time, these are well-known and fully watched. Meanwhile the neurotic attack upon German and Austrian refugees continues upon its course as indiscriminately as ever. The latest absurdities are that young Germans are now forbidden to join the Auxiliary Pioneer Corps, though they may have fought the Nazis for years, and that Spanish infantrymen and Czech pilots have been imprisoned. Such measures, instead of countering the Fifth Column, may well create one, by embittering European

democrats against the country which claims to be fighting the battle of freedom.

Men and Measures

Mr. Churchill is clearly determined to resist all demands for Cabinet changes, and he can argue that if Mr. Chamberlain has become a symbol of disaster for the Left and in the U.S.A., he is equally a symbol of national unity for the Conservative Party. The argument is of dubious validity, for Mr. Chamberlain has become to the younger Conservatives, and particularly to ex-Service men, the symbol of what has been wrong with Britain. If, in spite of this, the changes in personnel are now regarded as unwise, an advance of policy becomes all the more imperative. It is a pity that Mr. Hore-Belisha's position in the House is so weak, for his speech at Devonport was statesmanlike and expressed anxieties about our foreign policy and especially the problem of Ireland which are widely felt. Far more significant, however, was Mr. John Marchbank's address to N.U.R. delegates and their unanimous demand for Mr. Chamberlain's resignation. The Government should not neglect these warnings. The new Emergency Powers have been, so far, almost exclusively used to mobilise Labour; and Mr. Morrison and Mr. Bevin will soon be driven into an impossible position unless sacrifices are exacted from Capital as great as those which the Trade Unions have made. The antipathy shown towards Mr. Chamberlain is not mainly a personal matter: it is the expression of a feeling that this has not yet become a people's war nor the Government a people's Government. Labour has gained valuable concessions—witness the new agricultural minimum wage, and the new scales for Old Age Pensions and Unemployment Insurance. But more is needed than these measures of appeasement. If we are to become a united people, the Cabinet must introduce a larger measure of social justice. There are two suggestions which we would make, first the repeal of the Trade Disputes Act and, secondly, the imposition of a capital levy. If such measures were accepted by the Conservative Party and the employing class in the same spirit as the Trade Unions have accepted the sacrifice of their cherished rights, there would be far less resentment against the retention of Mr. Chamberlain in the Cabinet.

The Supply of Labour

The moment for transferring to different ports a large part of our shipping services has now plainly arrived; and with a view to this the Ministry of Labour has made a new agreement with the port employers and the Transport Workers' Union. This is based on a division of the whole country into four port regions, between which labour will be completely interchangeable on the terms as to pay and conditions agreed upon soon after the outbreak of war. Labour will also be transferable, in case of need, between the regions; and in effect the entire dock service will now come under unified national control. There is no doubt that, in this and other fields, Mr. Bevin has got to work very rapidly in making the best use of the existing labour supply within each separate industry. For example, steps have been taken to mobilise the workers in the fine cotton trade for three-shift working on aeroplane fabrics, and in many other cases similar transfers are being made on a big scale. On the other hand, we are still not working much of our indispensable machinery, even where supplies are shortest, for anything like twenty-four hours a day; and there is still too much tendency to rely on overtime by the existing labour force instead of speeding up to the utmost the recruitment and training of additional workers. Now that the battle of France is over, our problem is not so much one of days as of weeks and months; and it is false economy to keep men working at a pace they cannot possibly sustain for long. The time for wholesale dilution and the absorption of every available worker has now arrived; but we can see no sign as yet that this problem is being tackled on an at all adequate scale.

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FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES

UNDER the impact of disaster the Government has been necessarily forced to concentrate its main attention on supply and defence. What was not inevitable was the mood in which this policy has been pursued. Government spokesmen argue that we are fighting for our lives: there is no time to consider long term plans or to recall the objects for which we are supposed to be fighting. These pleasant luxuries must be put into cold storage until we have overcome the immediate danger. Those who take this view pride themselves on their realism and denounce their critics as shallow idealists. But are they as realistic as they imagine? To see clearly our own and our opponents' objectives is essential for the strategy of the war itself; for war aims determine the character both of our tactics and of our defensive preparations. If the members of the Government have no time to rethink their war aims, this means that consciously or unconsciously they accept the strategy of the Chamberlain Government and all that it implies. We are to fight for our lives, they say, but really this must mean that we are to fight for the nation-state and the empire which Mr. Chamberlain and his associates were driven to defend. But one thing is clear. Whatever the issue of this war, the social structure of this country and of its Empire will not survive. Indeed, the wisest policy for a government determined to defend the *status quo* would be to follow the French example and to seek to ensure for the industrialists at home and the profiteers of empire abroad that they should retain at least 10 per cent. of their profits under Hitler's hegemony. For there is neither strategy nor tactics which will enable us to end this war as we began it, an easy-going, island people, living well off the fruits of empire.

The realists who maintain that our position is too serious for time to be spent on a consideration of war aims are really ostrichs of a peculiarly stupid kind. Blinding themselves to the European civil war which underlies this battle of old and new empires, they overlook the only factors which can bring us victory. And they fail to realise that the overthrow of the Nazi rule over Europe—the only victory conceivable—can only be achieved if, while we are "fighting for our lives" we begin to work for certain specific objectives of interest not only to the inhabitants of this island, but to Europe at large. If we are prepared to sacrifice not only our lives, but the privileges of our nation and its dependencies for these objectives, we and the rest of Europe can achieve our freedom: if we are not, it is idle to upbraid the Pétain Government for its betrayal. It is stupid to sacrifice the lives and livelihood of millions in order to defend an indefensible position.

Either we turn this war into a war of European revolution or we shall be defeated. There is no half-way house. Against the brute force of Hitler, no mere material forces or military power will prevail. But against the idea for which Hitler stands—the European peoples more terribly enslaved than they ever were to the forces of capitalism—the revolutionary idea can prevail. That idea, that war aim, can and must become the strategy upon which we base the defence of this island. The use of it as an instrument of war is possible for us now as it never was before. The entry of Mussolini into the war, the collapse of France, the immediate threats to many parts of our Empire, all these were defeats so long as the war was fought for the defence of the *status quo*. They could become positive factors in our favour if we made our aim not the salvation of property and social status and imperial prestige but the emancipation of Europe, from Hitler and his *Gauleiters*.

With that war aim as our strategy, the defence of this island takes on a new form. Britain becomes the rallying point of revolutionary forces all over Europe and beyond its frontiers; the bridgehead from which the counter-offensive can be launched, not merely by the armed forces of the British nation, but by the European leaders of the people's war. The Nazi offensive against plutocracy is finished: the new German plutocrats stand suddenly on the defensive, guarding their ill-gotten gains against the revolutionary fury of the oppressed peoples. Merely to suggest this offensive strategy is to expose the lamentable failure of two vital departments of State, the Foreign Office and the Home Office, and the lack of imagination displayed by the War Cabinet. Sir John Anderson may be a capable servant: as master he has followed disastrous counsellors. In yielding to an ignorant clamour he has in the last two months discouraged and embittered those non-British Europeans—he calls them "aliens"—who have taken refuge in our island fortress. British nationals are regarded as people above suspicion unless there is overwhelming evidence: every foreigner, especially if he has the misfortune of having served for years in the

anti-Fascist struggle is suspected. The men from all the countries of Europe, who should and could form to-day a European legion to defend this island and prepare the revolution, are handled like criminals and interned without even the facilities to read and write. This racialism might have been copied from the Nazis. Hitler trusts some aliens enough to use them in his service and is wise enough to know that good breeding is not a sufficient test of his countrymen's reliability. But Sir John Anderson, instead of setting out to divide the reliable from the suspect elements, whether British or non-British, seems too often to make the passport a test of reliability. By so doing, he creates a cover under which real Fifth Columnists can work with impunity. So long as the English big-wig who has hob-nobbed with Hitler is regarded as more reliable than a Spanish republican who has fought him for years, the Home Office will unconsciously play into the hands of the Gestapo.

Turn now to the Foreign Office. Under the high-minded gentility of Lord Halifax the foreign policy of this country has remained a policy of studied drift and painstaking solicitude for our enemies, of cold indifference towards forces which might be on our side. The Churchill-Labour Government began its domestic policy with a democratic revolution: its Labour members cannot be unaware that abroad its policy has been neither democratic nor revolutionary. Lord Halifax is so determined not to pain our enemies that he antagonises potential friends. General Franco on instructions from Berlin seizes Tangier: Lord Halifax politely concurs, apparently in the belief that the threat to Gibraltar will be diminished because Sir Samuel Hoare is sitting in Madrid making eyes at the Caudillo. The Japanese briskly tell us to connive at the destruction of China. Sir Robert Craigie, ever anxious to maintain the friendliest relations with Tokio, prevaricates. By so doing, he incurs the contempt of the Japanese, the indignation of the Chinese and exasperation of the U.S.A. Instead of rallying the forces of freedom both among the French people and in the French troops here in England by a bold denunciation of its servility to the Nazis, Lord Halifax hesitates for ten days, and so permits the demoralisation of French public opinion to take its course. It did not help the cause of French resistance to put in gaol those members of the French Foreign Legion who refused to obey the command to surrender.

But, it will be urged, such a foreign policy, though humiliating, is forced on us by the exigencies of our present situation. The precise opposite is true. It was the shillyshallying and compromises with the forces of Fascism which prepared the ground for our defeats; and it is shillyshallying and compromise which will prepare the ground for our next defeat if we continue to permit them. The Japanese demand that we should close the Burma road to the supplies of armaments for China. What should we lose by taking the path of honour and saying to Japan: "We have not many forces available to resist, but if you want the Burma road closed you must do it by force?" What can we lose by freely admitting that the present French Government is the tool of Hitler and that Franco is the *Gauleiter* of Spain? The answer is precisely nothing. Diplomatic courtesies will not blunt the knives of the assassins: our object is to create a sword to destroy them. And that is only possible if we boldly state that this island has become the rallying-point of the anti-Nazi revolution, and gladly welcome as comrades in arms every man and woman prepared to fight with us in the struggle. We are fighting for our lives, but that is no reason why we should lose our heads. To fight in defence of this island without the strategy which a revolutionary war aim implies is to commit suicide, not to fight for our lives.

IRELAND IN DANGER

THE German invasion is likely to begin with an attempt on Ireland and almost certain to include it. Northern Ireland is already in the war: the Government of the Free State, a neutral country, declared its will to defend it against any invader. Yet there is no co-ordination of defence. Nor can there be until the right political steps are taken. They must be taken at once.

There are two Irelands: and let it not be forgotten that the Civil War was fought on the acceptance of the Treaty which partitioned the country; and that the Civil War ended unresolved because in the words of anti-Treaty De Valera, "our people . . . are weary and need a rest"; and that the Agreement which followed, under which even the slender safeguards by which the Irish delegates had been induced to sign the Treaty were abolished, was received by the Republican leaders with "abhorrence" and "unalterable opposition." The intensity of feeling prevalent in 1925 has been damped by the intervening years and complicated by the differences brought about by the policy of the De Valera Government: but it is dormant, not dead.

Not unnaturally, the current feeling of the mass of the people, confronted with an internal tangle as well as the prospect of embroilment in the European war, is one of bewilderment which often finds refuge in mere indifference. War conditions, however, have caused the cost of living to scale steeply upwards, and the attitude of the Government has considerably increased popular discontent with Fianna Fail. At the present moment all the old pro-Treaty men are in the Defence Council: and the Communists and the Republicans are being arrested or interned, while the new amendment to the E.P.A. sets up a court with one sentence only, that of death, and with no right of appeal. The recruiting campaign is, however, having a marked success; chiefly because the authorities are making their appeal to the national feeling which they know exists as strongly as ever. The strength of the armed forces has been raised in a month from 30,000 to 100,000—without conscription.

The almost universal attitude of the Irish to the war is that it is none of their business. It cannot be too often stated or too heavily stressed that the majority of the Irish do not consider themselves part of the British Empire and deeply resent the suggestion that they should, as a matter of course, be fighting alongside Great Britain. They are prevented from taking an anti-fascist line by their considerable ignorance of the nature and record of fascism, which has been deliberately suppressed by the Catholic interests on account of the Church's affiliations with Franco Spain and with Italy. The only knowledge they have of fascist methods is therefore drawn from their direct experience of the Black and Tans and of the Orangemen of the North. This is not to say that in any sense there would be acquiescence in a Nazi invasion: the people are united in their determination to have no foreign conquerors at all. The British and the extreme Unionists often, however, overlook that this means them, too.

The people, then, are bewildered and suspicious; and nobody has forgotten how the British put it across them in 1921 and 1925. Churchill's prominence serves as a timely reminder of the Trouble. There is an all-Party Defence Council, but not a National Government; there is talk of "imminent peril," the idea of invasion pervades every newspaper, there are mutterings of Fifth Columns. Yet the people are not told what invasion to fear or how to prepare adequately. Many are fearful that in the dread of a German invasion they will find themselves sold again to the British; Craigavon's grudging offer of conditional co-operation between North and South will merely stir up resentment. The acceptance of his terms might well mean civil war.

An interesting symptom in the last fortnight is the appearance of a non-party manifesto signed by Peadar O'Donnell and by George Gilmore: both names carry considerable weight, as those of men who fought in the Trouble and who have never ceased to work for the undivided Republic. Both remained in the I.R.A. until they were expelled several years ago, with others of the leaders, for insisting on a progressive social and economic policy. The importance of their manifesto lies not in its actual wording, which is not particularly new and which is strikingly unconstructive, but in its reflection of the ferment and confusion among the mass of the Irish people. Here are some quotations:

> If the British had only the vision to take their armed forces out of Ireland, this nation would now be ready to do every possible and impossible thing to defend its neutrality. . . . If British armed forces appeared in Southern Ireland there would be an immediate armed uprising against them. If the Germans appeared in support of that uprising the Irish forces should disentangle themselves and stand aside. . . . What is really vital, therefore, is that no section of our people should attempt to induce either the British or Germans to invade Southern Ireland. . . . The British Fifth Column has shown its face so often we know its features well. The national will counts no more with them to-day than it did in the Tan days. . . . The German Fifth Column has made its open appearance. It is mainly that section of the Blueshirts which accepted direction from international fascism. . . . It would be very easy to start panic to the cry "We are sold again to the British." . . . How does Mr. De Valera expect the crowd who swept the Union Jack out of view and smothered Imperialist demonstrations to rally to a defence council wherein the black muzzles of these monopoly interests show? . . . For all its mistakes the I.R.A. are not a Fifth Column seeking invasion by any foreign power . . . they would not conspire to down De Valera to build up a puppet state for Germany, any more than they will co-operate with Messrs. Mulcahy and Dillon to defend the neutrality of the Trusts on which British control of Irish life rests. But they will eagerly co-operate with the hosts within

and beyond Fianna Fail for the security of the nation . . . Parish Defence Committees. No truck with any of the belligerents. No part in a fight between Germany and Britain in Ireland.

O'Duffy's Blueshirts suffered a very serious political setback and incurred a lot of ridicule over their fiasco in Spain, before which they had been the most powerful influence in Cosgrave's Fine Gael Party. It is now clear that they have been trying to recoup by intriguing with their friends abroad. They are reputed to be doing their best to permeate the Eire Army; and it is certainly true that one of O'Duffy's lieutenants, Dermot O'Sullivan, has joined up. They are reputed also to be financed by a leading Irish industrialist concerned in several of the new trusts. The question of parish councils, advocated by the Church authorities for some years, is of extreme importance. In spite of the reactionary intentions of most of the people who advocate them, these parish councils would not in themselves be a retrograde step. The suggested organisation is so loose and adaptable that their function depends entirely on the personnel which gets control of them: they could be in the right hands the most democratic bodies conceivable, and could be used to ensure local defence autonomy.

A word on the North: it is clear that the Craigavon junta has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. They are Carsonites and proud of it, Orangemen before all else. The British would do well to remember that the record of the extreme Northern Unionists is one of open and flagrant illegality and rebellion in defence of their privileged position; only last week, when reminded that his Party ran Churchill out of Belfast twenty-six years ago, Craigavon replied, "And I would do the same again if anyone came here to interfere with the rights of Ulster." That is to say, if there were any danger of an all-Ireland Parliament in which he and his "family party" would find themselves in a minority.

The common people of the North are, of course, divided. There is a good deal of "Pope-eating" jingoism, which has been fostered by the Orange Lodges for so many years that it cannot now be abolished overnight; and many of the quite moderate Protestants naturally regard the Eire Catholic Constitution very dubiously. The Labour Party has severed relations with the Irish Labour Party in order to support the British Labour Party's war policy. The Trade Unions are affiliated, some to London and some to Dublin, but are all anti-fascist. The Catholic Nationalists (practically a third of the population) have received such abominable treatment at the hands of the "Protestant Parliament for a Protestant People" that they remain bitterly hostile to all its works.

It is agreed on both sides of the Border that partition vastly increases the difficulties of defence: the division of the country has directly caused this explosive situation in which *any* invasion will mean a disastrous civil war at the same time: yet how can there be a united defence council between a belligerent and a neutral? Both of them must modify their attitude. It can be taken as certain that Eire will not line up with "the rest of the Empire," and that if its Government makes any move in that direction trouble will flare up everywhere. Eire can demand that partition be held an open question; not that it should be abolished forthwith.

What practical step can be taken immediately? First, the Craigavon Government should be superseded by a soldier or administrator who is not tarred with a partisan brush. A statement should at once be issued to the whole population of Ireland, expressing in the most explicit terms that the island would be regarded as a single unit for defence; and that in the event of invasion the control of all Ireland's defences would be in Irish hands. For the purposes of common defence partition would be suspended; the future Constitution would be decided by the Irish themselves as soon as Ireland's liberty from the invader was assured.

The fusion of the defences of the whole island enormously facilitate the necessary measures, it might indeed render invasion so difficult and costly as to be impracticable. A united Ireland would undoubtedly be prepared to accept material assistance from her nearest neighbour as well, of course, as from America. But it is essential to unite the nation *for its own defence*, not for a foreign war. The rapidly growing Irish army could be usefully strengthened by drafts enlisted from the Irish communities all over the world.

An emergency defence council should be constituted under an efficient and imaginative leadership acceptable to both sections. This defence council would have to pool all resources, complete the enlistment of an Irish army, make full arrangements—under safeguards—for the patrolling of the coastal waters, and obtain at once, from the only sources of supply now open to neutrals, abundance of munitions. It would have to command the trust of the nation as a whole by the most explicit guarantees of national integrity and post-war free popular representation, enforceable if necessary by an outside power. The U.S.A., of course, leaps to the mind as referee. In this connection the profound contempt and disbelief of the Irish in the face of British "undertakings" must never be forgotten.

Finally, two statements from Eire this week should be noted. In reply to Craigavon's offer of co-operation on terms, the *Irish Press* (the Government paper) states: "The Irish people are in vast majority determined that Ireland shall be an independent and sovereign nation with all the rights of free community, including the right of the nation's elected representatives to determine whether or not the nation shall be committed to war." And the Minister for Defensive Measures has pointed out that *from Britain's point of view* "it is of infinitely greater strategic importance that this island should be a strong and united neutral, with high morale and a firm purpose, than that it should be a weak and reluctant belligerent torn with doubt and division."

JOHN HAWKINS

THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

IN the light of the past, most of what occurs seems fated to have occurred. Now, certainly, that Mr. Wendell Wilkie has become the Republican candidate for the American Presidency, his choice seems to have been a pretty inevitable one. Mr. Dewey had a factitious glamour; but he was obviously without political experience, and every time he made a speech he made himself less "available." Senator Taft was solid and respectable, but he was very dull; he would have made an even less effective candidate than Governor Landon in 1936. Senator Vandenberg had beaten himself in half a dozen primaries; he obviously did not look presidential timber to the electorate. Mr. Hoover, I fancy, hoped against hope to the end; but to have run him was a political impossibility; for the memories of the Great Depression are still too keen. I doubt whether there is an unemployed man in the United States who would vote for him; and there are some eight million unemployed.

With all the bitter past for the Republican Party Mr. Wilkie has no connection; he is what is known as a "depression success." Few people had ever heard of him until seven or eight years ago; no one thought of him as a possible candidate until, on November 20th, 1939, Mr. Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* mentioned him as a name worth consideration. But he was relatively young; he is only forty-eight. He comes from Indiana. He has built up a great financial empire in the public utilities field. He is a vigorous personality, with fire and courage, and the kind of easy charm Americans like. He appeals to the business man because he has been one of the outstanding critics of the New Deal; to Wall Street, therefore, and, not less important, to Mr. Babbitt of Main Street, he will seem safe and sound. He is the descendant of German refugees of 1848 and a bitter critic of Hitlerism; so that the overwhelming majority of Americans who want Hitlerism defeated need not feel that a vote against Roosevelt is a vote for Hitler. He has been a strong defender of civil liberties, so that there is a "progressive" tinge to his appeal, reinforced by the fact that he was once a sympathiser with the late Senator La Follette. He is largely self-made, so that something of the log cabin tradition is embodied in him. He preaches the American ideal of the prosperity that comes from absence of government regulation and the glory of free business enterprise. And the Republican machine did not want him, so that his election can be urged on the ground that he is free from the undesirable connections implied in being its man.

All in all, Mr. Wilkie is about the strongest nominee the Republican Convention could have chosen. But Mr. Wilkie is not quite the straightforwardly successful business man that he will be painted as being in the next four months. Essentially, he is Wall Street's candidate. The men who have promoted the amazing pre-election campaign so carefully staged are the bankers, the insurance men, and the bond salesmen. They remember that his financial empire was built with the aid of the Morgan house, who did not do badly for the "Street" out of it. They see in him the man who fought magnificently against the T.V.A. and emerged not dishonoured by his defeat. They will tell one another how finely he "broke" a "radical" newspaper in Chattanooga, and showed himself an adept in those rather devious ways by which "sound" men are made to understand that there are limits beyond which attacks on property cannot be allowed to go. Were Mr. Wilkie in the White House all the interests that have been arrayed against Mr. Roosevelt since 1932 will be able to sleep quietly in their beds. Labour will be put in its place; the Securities and Exchange Commission will not watch quite so narrowly the big operators in stocks; there will be no big experiments in the public ownership of power; W.P.A. will be confined within the narrowest

limits. In a word, if Mr. Wilkie wins, the New Deal will be over. He is essentially the candidate foisted upon the Republicans by big business, which is confident that no other in the field had the chance of making a show against so formidable an opponent as Mr. Roosevelt.

He marks, of course, the recognition that public opinion in America will not now stand a real isolationist in the White House. Mr. Wilkie's difficulties in the campaign are going to be very real. He will largely accept the President's foreign policy; his attack will be on American unpreparedness before the crisis. But that is not a very powerful argument since, first, he is against armed intervention, and, second, preparation against attack is now in the hands of two eminent and universally respected Republicans in Mr. Stimson and Colonel Knox. Mr. Wilkie will not have a united party behind him, and he will have considerable difficulty in explaining away the isolationist support he will receive, on the one hand, and that from the forces of hyphenated Americans who will work for him out of hatred for Mr. Roosevelt, on the other. Like Mr. Hughes in 1916, I think he will find himself embarrassed by his friends before the campaign is over.

And, on the domestic side, his task will be very difficult. No one will believe that he believes in the principles of the New Deal, however much he may try to appear a progressive. His record, his associations, the sources from which his funds will be drawn, all make the reality too evident. He will find Labour practically solid against him; whatever its disappointments, Labour knows that the forces behind Mr. Wilkie are those which have been fighting social reform for a generation. I doubt whether he has anything to offer the farmer which compares with cheap electricity and the farm programme Mr. Wallace has put through on the President's behalf. It is bound to count against him that, at so critical a period, he has no experience of politics, so that, whether he will or no, after election he would be hopelessly dependent on the experienced managers of the machine. And, above all, the world he represents is the world which took the United States into the crash of 1929 and the depression which followed. Mr. Wilkie may protest that he is the candidate of prosperity, the man who can organise new investment. I do not think he will be more successful in his protest than was Governor Landon four years ago.

Assets, of course, he has. There is the third-term tradition, which dies hard. But I miss my guess if the magnitude of the crisis has not, in fact, taken most of the heart out of that tradition. There is the probability that he will prove an attractive candidate; Mr. Wilkie has a way with him, a certain genius for the quick acquisition of popularity. He will have immense funds at his disposal; the Republicans realise how immense will be the blow to their prestige to suffer—what they have never suffered—a third successive defeat. They will put everything they have into the campaign, for defeat in November may mean a large-scale realignment in American parties.

This is, of course, on the assumption that the President decides to run again. It is difficult to see now how he can avoid that decision. It has become the general expectation; the public opinion polls show that his candidature is more widely approved than at any previous time. Even the least progressive Democrats know that he can win; and they do not feel confident that anyone else can win. There is no one else with his hold on the masses in America. There is no one else, either, with the same knowledge of the international scene or the same power to handle it skilfully. Vital America knows that for Mr. Roosevelt not to run would be a major victory for Hitler; in the circumstances, he cannot be allowed by his party to withdraw. And, once he runs, the masses will not permit his defeat, partly because that, too, would be a victory for Hitler and, partly because they feel so long as he is in the White House privilege will not be the master of their destinies. Mr. Roosevelt has made plenty of blunders, but he has driven home that sense inescapably to the little man. All the things he symbolises are in danger, at home and abroad; Americans are aware that they are in danger. That is why I am confident that, though the Republicans have done their best, on the assumption that Mr. Roosevelt fights again their best is not good enough. Mr. Wilkie must hope that he does sufficiently well to create the tradition that his defeat is not a bar to a future victory.

HAROLD J. LASKI

A LONDON DIARY

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S broadcast was designed to reassure America. The American press has for some time been putting two and two together and has come to the conclusion that Britain would have to make terms. The breakdown of France, the failure of even her colonies to fight, the doubts about large parts of the French Navy, the hostile coastline from Narvik to Bordeaux, Sir Samuel Hoare at Madrid and Mr. Chamberlain still in the Government—the deduction that Britain would have to make the best terms she could was very natural. Whereupon Mr. Chamberlain gave an interview to the United Press, which was circulated all over America and, as this seemed to have little of the desired effect, he followed it up with a broadcast. The whole story of the coming capitulation can probably be traced to Dr. Goebbels.

* * *

The latest story is that Hitler has suggested terms through independent Spanish sources. According to the American press he suggests that the Axis, i.e., the Nazi, hegemony of Europe should be accepted, that the French, Dutch, and Belgian colonies should become "European colonies" (which raises a curious point about German-Italian relations with Japan) and that Britain should give up two colonies to Germany and make an alliance with the Nazi regime. This story is denied by the Foreign Office, and the Spanish Ambassador disclaims any knowledge of such proposals. Whatever the source of this story, it is interesting as an indication of the future which Hitler envisages. It is the logical fulfilment of the policy of Munich and would lead direct to the Axis war on the U.S.S.R. supported by France and Britain as vassal States of Germany. There are people here, as there were in France, to whom this has always seemed a desirable policy and more who regard it as the lesser evil. It has always been the policy of the Lavals and Flandins: they could not beat the French people themselves so they have waited for Hitler to do it for them. The present British Government is set against such terms—Mr. Chamberlain no less than Mr. Churchill. We are a proud people; the troops and the navy and the air force are in fine fettle; we know that Hitler's word is worthless. Therefore, however great our danger, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee agree that we are to fight on and that indubitably is the will of the country to-day. It is a terrific decision, but once it is made, then, in the name of all that's brave and sane, let us organise ourselves efficiently, and let us realise that this war cannot be won on a purely national basis, but that it can be won if Britain is prepared to lead a European revolution. The revolution against Nazi domination must come some day: we have the chance to organise it now.

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There has been a vast improvement recently in the B.B.C. postscripts to the news. Last Sunday, for instance, instead of dreary Maurice Healy, we had a brilliant talk by J. B. Priestley and on Monday Ellen Wilkinson's appeal to the women was admirably done. My charlady, however, says that Miss Wilkinson is too optimistic: there are friends of hers who have looked everywhere for war work and found nothing which does not involve breaking up their homes. J. B. Priestley's picture of officialdom poking its head over the fence and saying "Hush" when the public asked how the war was going expressed exactly what we all feel. And as long as that goes on the Ministry of Information's campaigns to maintain home morale can never be completely successful. Morale is high—among the Dominions soldiers uproariously high—but cheerfulness is mixed with a good deal of apprehension. Inevitably people wonder if officialdom is really grappling with defence against invasion and optimistic assurances from on high are decreasingly believed. We have heard them all before. Nothing spreads such gloom as the complacent voice of a naval or military expert telling us that we are really quite safe—leave it to the General Staff. The French did that. I have a feeling that the new Cabinet is already falling a victim to the worst disease of its predecessor, a complacent sense of irritation at any expression of public opinion. Directly anyone makes a suggestion which the Cabinet has not considered he is suspect and the *Daily Herald* writes a leader pooh-poohing amateur interference. That is a fatal attitude of mind for the leaders of a democracy in a moment of crisis, and it leads to the idea that "pep talks" and uplift are what we need on the wireless. Actually we need precise instructions about what to do, and careful answers to our fears, doubts and objections by men and women who understand them. The best propaganda recently for home morale was done not by the Ministry but by *Picture Post* in its excellent advertisement in the Sunday papers urging civil servants to cut their own red tape. *Picture Post* has followed this up with a special number about the U.S.A. It is full of good stuff and fine pictures. I suppose I must not complain that the space apportioned to share-croppers, unemployment and so forth is inadequate?

* * *

I have read two books lately which I hope will become popular in spite of the slump in the publishing trade. The first is Robert Waithmann's *Report on America* (Frederick Muller, 12*s.* 6*d.*). Waithmann is New York correspondent of the *News Chronicle* and has

managed to combine information and entertainment in a really readable book, which deals with life as well as politics. With this as a background the layman should be able to form a pretty shrewd judgment of American news. The other book is *Germany: Jekyll and Hyde* (Secker and Warburg), by Sebastian Haffner. This is the best book on Germany since Rauschning's *Revolution of Destruction* and is, incidentally, a great deal more readable. How much better our policy and our propaganda would have been if our politicians had read Haffner's analysis of the Nazi type and his sober estimate of the negative and positive anti-Nazi forces. There is also a moving chapter on the use which might have been made of refugee anti-Nazis. Haffner has, of course, been interned!

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For the third time in a fortnight I have been to see *Thunder Rock*, the remarkable play being acted at the Neighbourhood Theatre in South Kensington. Each time I have enjoyed it more. Mr. Desmond MacCarthy has already talked in this journal about the brilliance of the acting and production and its heartening effect on the audience. In truth, it is manna in a hungry land; it is amusing, moving and intellectually exciting. It puts the problem which has confronted journalists perhaps more than anyone else. To state the facts during the last eight years was inevitably to call the world to action, and the action, if it was too late, meant war. War on a world scale probably meant the destruction of our civilisation. The journalist found it impossible to be a mere observer. In this play two such observers take opposite decisions, one, holding that the world still has a "Chinaman's choice," goes to fight and is killed in China. The other seeks an escape in an imaginative ivory tower and there learns that people in the past like himself despaired of civilisation, but that if they had been tougher and had hung on they would have seen the things they desire come true. Every problem, according to this play, has a solution which will be found sooner or later. For instance, America's action to-day may decide whether the problem of war is solved soon or in a thousand years. One sees in this philosophy an echo of Marx, who learnt from Hegel to believe in the emergence of the rational synthesis. Marx was a man of the nineteenth century who believed in progress; he was a Jew who substituted the triumph of the proletariat for that of the Chosen People. I see no reason to believe in this inevitable progress. True, there will be a solution, but progress involves a change for the better, and the solution may be worse for mankind than the unresolved problem. Many problems that call for a solution have never been solved. Hitler would say that he had found a solution—world conquest for Germany. The Brave New World of Aldous Huxley is a solution, but a solution at the expense of human individuality, which appears to me the one valuable thing about society. The reason why one must struggle for a better social order is that in that order there will be more opportunities for those relations of friendship and appreciation of beauty and that genuine happiness which are the final human values. It is no comfort to me to be told that we may reach a solution which turns human beings into robots. I get most comfort myself through believing that human actions and states of mind are valuable in themselves even when the people are defeated. Montaigne and Robert Owen are valuable even though the world has never been a tolerant or a co-operative commonwealth.

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I was turning this problem over in my mind when I read Ramsay Muir's book, *Civilisation and Liberty*, published by Jonathan Cape. It costs only 2*s*. 6*d*. because its financing has been aided by the Association for Education in Citizenship. Here is a plain piece of old-fashioned liberal thinking. Ramsay Muir sees the human story in terms of the increase of liberty. In this I believe he is right, and those who want a short account of the increase of individual liberty will find his book invigorating. To me, however, it is a profoundly unsatisfactory book because Mr. Muir does not at any point understand historical progress and the forces which have given us an increase of liberty during the last two hundred years. The apostles of liberty have been important, but they could never have succeeded without the solid concurrence of certain social forces, and the reason why liberty has fallen into decline to-day is not that individual dictators have wantonly decided to destroy it but because its basic conditions are threatened by technical changes. In a word, liberty could be maintained in the nineteenth century because a man with a gun could quickly become a soldier; governments were therefore forced to listen to public opinion. If the public was too far outraged it could throw barricades across the street and with luck hold out against the armed forces of the crown. To-day liberty is threatened because of machines which make huge areas of government necessary and which arm the rulers with wireless to dictate to the nation and aeroplanes and tanks to destroy any possible popular uprising. Those who mind about liberty have to consider, not how the individual can regain the power against the State that he had in the last century, but how we may get people at the head of these vast organised states who care about the happiness of the people whom they govern.

* * *

I have found no more satisfactory odd-minute reading lately than Julien Françon's *The Mind of the Bees*. M. Françon is a bit like Maeterlinck; those who study these perfectly organised communities almost inevitably begin to explain the behaviour of bees too much in human terms. But M. Françon draws his deductions from a series of fascinating experiments—all the more fascinating because they are experiments that any amateur can try for himself. The mystery, of course, is to explain how the worker bees so organise themselves that the right number do the right job at the right time, so that so many feed the queen, so many build the cone, so many collect the honey, water and pollen, and the rest of it. How do they communicate? How do they know what to do? I remember a book of Dr. W. H. Rivers in which he describes a Melanesian community in which each man appeared to fall naturally into his job and co-operate with the others without anyone giving any orders. Bees obviously have some similar and far more complete communal sense. In trying to get to the bottom of this mystery, M. Françon began not with examining what the bees do in the hive, which is the more usual way, but with experiments on individual bees which he captured while they were at work in the flowers. Bees visiting flowers will not turn aside to examine honey or sugar on a plate and you cannot follow their movements while they move from one flower to another. Therefore, M. Françon first captured his bee in a glass, inverted on a saucer with sugar on it. Then, having waited until the bee had settled on the sugar, he took the glass away, marked his bee with paint and did all sorts of interesting experiments to discover the accuracy of the bee's sense of direction, the number of journeys it would do to the sugar and the number of companions it would bring. He moved the saucer while the bee was away to find that it came back to the precise spot where the saucer had been, and that it would still find the way even when the saucer was so covered that there was a long dark tunnel to go through to reach the sugar. According to M. Françon, if the booty on the saucer is really good value, moistened sugar for instance, the bee will bring a large number of helpers so that the prize shall not be wasted. If the booty is not so good, e.g. hard sugar, he will not bring so many helpers. All this seemed to me great fun and I tried to carry out these experiments myself in the garden the other day. Easy enough to get your bee on the saucer of sugar, wait till it leaves off buzzing about and begins to feed, take the glass away and mark the bee with paint. That was as far as my experiments went. For some reason or other, my bees did not fill up and then go hot-winged to the hive and bring back help. They went from the saucer on to the grass or other plants and never came back. It was a disappointment. I must try again. One fact I did notice that M. Françon does not mention. The individual behaviour of different bees under the glass was surprising. Number one bee was a long time before he gave up trying to escape and got down to the sugar. Number two bee behaved perfectly and was eating sugar hard after only a minute's anger. Number three bee would not have the sugar at all but continued to try to get out until I gave it up. Number four bee found the sugar, but would not sit down and kept on trying to get out between periods of attacking the sugar. Possibly these differences are to be accounted for by different degrees in shaking up involved in catching the bees? Anyway, I am inclined to start a new line for myself and investigate the psychological differences of bees whose minds are divided between the desire to escape and the desire to fill up with nectar.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to V. M. Kaulback.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

With reference to a letter asking for suggestions for a national emblem for these times, I would suggest a drawing of a church on a hill.

This would have a double meaning. It would testify that Christianity must conquer paganism and it would allude also to Churchill, our gallant and indomitable leader.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph*.

Though park railings in Manchester are being removed for scrap, the park gates will be retained and locked as usual at nights to indicate that the parks are in theory closed.—*The Daily Dispatch*, Manchester.

I beg a small space to enter a most energetic protest against the wanton and deliberate waste of petrol on the part of the Kent Education Committee by allowing their several expensive library vans to be still used for the distribution of books. Fancy, books! What do we want with books at such a time as this?—Letter in *Kentish Express*.

Don't Be Afraid of War Wounds.—Heading in *News Chronicle*.

INSIDE NAZI GERMANY

SINCE the outbreak of the war Nazi newspapers have continued what one might call a sexual column along the lines of the "Agony" column in British and American newspapers. It consists of small personal advertisements in which German soldiers invite German women and girls to become mothers of children by them before they leave for the Front. The appeal is usually made to the women on grounds of patriotism and love of Nazism; occasionally the perpetuation and increase of the German race is given as a motive. Here is a sample of a typical advertisement of this type:

> I am a soldier, 22 years old, tall, blond, blue eyed. Before I go away to give up my life for my "Führer" and my country, I want to meet a German woman by whom I could leave a child and heir for the glory of the German Reich.

Hundreds of such advertisements appear in Nazi newspapers. The *Schwarze Korps*, the organ of the Gestapo, seems to have made a speciality of this feature.

Lately, the fashion in these advertisements has spread also to the women. Soldiers' widows, divorcées and unmarried girls use this medium as freely as the men. Here is a typical female advertisement:

> A German girl wants to become the mother of a child whose father is a German soldier fighting for National Socialism.

These advertisements seem to be encouraged by the Nazi regime as a means of stimulating breeding. Any woman who becomes pregnant with child by a soldier is given preference for Government positions and the child is brought up at the expense of the State.

It is interesting to note that the subject of marriage is almost never mentioned in these advertisements. Neither the female nor the male advertiser ever suggest that the chance meeting be terminated in a life together. Nor does it occur to anyone to inquire whether the future parents are already married. The entire question seems to be quite irrelevant to the advertisers, who are frankly advertising for promiscuous sexual relationship, or to the State, which is only interested in increasing the population.

* * *

On the occasion of the victory in France, the Nazi Government proclaimed an amnesty for political prisoners now in concentration camps and in prisons. Only those whose offences against the State were of a minor nature not involving heavy punishment are to be freed. Jews, Czechs, Poles and offenders of other nationalities, except Germans, are not included in the amnesty.

Yet the official figure of the number of Germans to be affected by the amnesty is given as 160,000. This gives an illuminating idea of the size and dimensions of anti-Nazi feeling in Germany.

SEVEN LITTLE BALKAN BOYS

SEVEN little Balkan boys did not care to mix,
Musso bagged Albania and then there were six.

Six little Balkan boys a *bloc* could not contrive,
Berlin called up Budapest and then there were five.

Five little Balkan boys, rattled by the war
Moscow bullied Bukharest and then there were four.

Four little Balkan boys still could not agree,
Turkey kept on staying out and so there were three.

Three little Balkan boys with different points of view,
Sofia rang up Stalin and then there were two.

Two little Balkan boys without a place to run,
Ciano called at Belgrade and then there was one.

One little Balkan boy stranded all alone,
One little Hellene can do nothing on his own.

Seven little Balkan boys had places in the sun,
The Balkans they were many, but the Greater Reich is one.

SAGITTARIUS

WOMEN IN DANGEROUS SERVICES

THIS is no time to talk of "women's rights"—except one of them: the right of women to give their lives for their country and that only when their lives can be usefully given. But there are plain signs that this right, even so qualified, is not being and will not be conceded unless women and intelligent men insist on and force the concession. The minds of most of those in authority are still like "poor Jim Jay, got stuck fast in yesterday." One example is the recent dismissal in a London borough of several women Air Post Wardens, who had held office unpaid for many months, on the ground that the work now required might be too rough for women and that burly men with big voices were more suitable. Then why so late a discovery? Another is the story told everywhere in the press of certain yachtswomen who offered to help in the evacuation of Dunkirk. One, on being refused "on account of her sex," replied, "Blast my sex." The officer who told the story "had a strong suspicion that she got over after all." But why did he try to stop her? The usual excuse, that women would hamper the men, who would feel obliged to protect them, does not serve here. If the yachtswomen got safely across who, in that hurly-burly, would have bothered about their sex? The men they embarked would have been as safe as in boats managed by elderly boatmen and boys. The yachts may have been unsuitable, but why yachtswomen?

The usual excuse is often a good one, not only because of the chivalrous tradition, but because, on the average, women are decidedly inferior to men in most of the qualities needed for dangerous service—in muscular strength, swiftness, mechanical ingenuity and dexterity, sense of direction, possibly—I am not sure—in courage and keeping their heads. But not all women, and not in all qualities, for example, quickness of observation, intuitive scent for character, incorruptibility, sobriety, willingness to risk life, etc. In case of invasion or guerilla warfare may not the supposed harmlessness of women become in itself an asset? The problem seems to be how to use (1) the exceptional woman; (2) the assets of the normal woman. The first hedge to get over is to enforce the principle that, in this hour, the sole test for dangerous service should be, first, the value of the service, secondly, the relative value of the life risked. The lives of a dozen average women just now are worth less to the country than one efficient soldier or male key worker and so should be proportionately more freely risked. The national interest must overcome every other sentiment.

What are the possible avenues of usefulness? First, for exceptional women qualified as aviators, rifle-shots, yachtswomen, etc. I am told that the small band of really good women aviators (including such people as Amy Johnson, Jean Batten, Pauline Gower) is now, after long delays, adequately used. Improvement of the less trained is impeded by shortage of planes. Several hundred rifle clubs have, I understand, women's sections, mostly small, and these include at least a few really first-class markswomen. Cannot these be listed and utilised as auxiliaries for the Local Defence Volunteers, perhaps working as instructors, or as observers in lonely places able to pick off single parachutists, perhaps accompanied by women or boy cyclists? As to women experts in yachting, rowing or swimming, could they not be used in patrolling the coast and in life-saving services? Are they being so used?

More numerous, probably, are the women who are accustomed to motor or cycle about the country. Many of the best motorists are finding useful employment in the several women's services auxiliary to the armed forces. But many others, excluded from these services by the age limit or by their domestic circumstances, might be used in their home districts, where their knowledge of local geography and personalities would be valuable to the L.V.D. Another sphere, in which the qualities traditionally conceded to women and the qualifications they undoubtedly possess might find scope is in the police, the detective service and the secret service. I am quite ignorant as to the means by which the two latter services are recruited and the extent to which women are employed in them. I do know that there has been hardly any wartime extension of the use of uniformed women police, in spite of the experience of the last great war, in which they proved their value in controlling the light-headed girls and experienced women harpies who are prone to hang about military camps and to besiege soldiers on leave with temptations from which these are better safeguarded. But as to the "hush-hush" services, it does seem common sense that the need for these must be multiplied ten-fold under war conditions, when the country is infested with hordes of foreigners of many nationalities, many of them innocent "victims of Nazi oppression" who have come in as refugees, others less innocent,

to say nothing of possible enemy agents who may arrive by air or sea and native "Quislings." Is there no use there for some of the educated women who are aching to be of service—travelled women who speak and read German, French or Italian, and have soaked themselves in the politics and literature of the Nazi-Fascist period? It seems probable that some of these women might be quicker in spotting dangerous people and in distinguishing between sheep and goats than many ordinary detectives whose training and experience have been largely concerned with the underworld and with the normal criminal population. Which would be the better equipped—such a woman or such a man—if required to establish contact with a supposedly suspicious alien, to discover his racial origin, his political history and sympathies, and to judge whether he was dangerous, or safe and even potentially useful? Many stories are current in the circles of workers among refugees, of highly placed military officers, lawyers and local officials, who have shown the blandest ignorance of the differences between Germans and Sudeten-Germans, Communists and Social-Democrats, or have assumed that every supporter of the late Spanish Republican Government must be a dangerous Red. Is it likely that the subordinates of these gentry are better informed, and must not their ignorance lead to mistakes of omission and commission?

Proposals have been put forward in some quarters that, in the present emergency, the whole population should be mobilised and possibly armed to meet the danger of invasion. I have heard formidable arguments, both in favour of and against this proposition. It greatly attracts me, but I do not venture an opinion as to its practicability. Mr. Clement Davies has put forward the bold suggestion that women as well as men should be armed with hand grenades for use against parachutists and tanks. Women are usually poor throwers, but I would rather trust some of them with such missiles than distribute them at random among the male population, at least unless the public houses were first closed.

The first step should be the formation of a Woman's Auxiliary to the L.D.V. Mr. Eden's reply to a Parliamentary Question of mine suggests that he is considering this. I understand that in some areas the L.D.V.s are actually using women, whether formally enrolled or not. This should be regularised and made general and, in the meantime, women who desire to serve in this way should offer their services locally and should be enrolled not merely, as in the other women's services auxiliary to the armed forces, for domestic and clerical duties, but as observers, patrols and—where suitable—as markswomen and grenade-throwers.

The second obvious step is the fuller employment of women as uniformed and plain-clothes police, detectives and members of the secret service. But women themselves must agitate if they want this done. There is no time to lose.

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

SEASIDE

IT would be going too far to call it a pang or a shock, but I certainly experienced a faint twinge of regret as I read a headline in the paper: "Beaches and Proms Closed from Brighton to Selsey." Ever since I first breathed the air of the place, I have loved Brighton. There is still enough of a politer age surviving in its squares and in patches along the front to make it the mellowest of all the capitals of pleasure. Many seaside resorts are mere barracks for holiday-makers. In Brighton, however, the artist has taken a hand in building a town that is (in parts) worthy of its setting beside the sea. To take a stroll along the promenade was to take a stroll, not only through nature, but through a piece of the civilised world, mixed it is true with the smell of whelks and the din of machines that by their violent collisions give amusement to the young. To sit at the end of a pier was to be on a pleasure-cruise without the trouble of going to sea. And now for the moment all this is ended. The very children with their spades and buckets are banished from the waterside. Brighton has for many purposes become an inland town.

How different an England came through the last war, when Great Britain was still an island! During the present war, one cannot easily imagine the staff of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION going to Brighton for a cheerful week-end holiday; yet during the last war the staff of *The New Statesman* spent a particularly enjoyable week-end at Brighton, with Mr. Shaw and the Webbs as the presiding geniuses of the party. There were few signs of the perils of war except for the extinction—or was it only the lowering?—of the lamps after what is still called lighting-up time. The visitor went about as freely as if the world had been at peace. I remember going for a moonlight walk along the promenade with Gerald Gould after midnight, and there was no one to suspect us of sinister activities.

In those days no one not in the fighting forces thought it in any way odd to take holidays as usual. Now that I look back on it, I feel a certain astonishment at my having gone with my family to the west of Ireland for a summer holiday in 1916. One would imagine that in such a year—not only the third year of the war but the year of the Irish insurrection—a normal man would not have had the heart to go for a seaside holiday to Ireland. Yet how natural a thing it seemed to do at the time! There were rumours of the presence of submarines in the Irish Sea, but there seemed to be nothing strange in taking two small children across, though we did take the precaution of buying a couple of lifebelts for them. In the smoking-room of the boat—for the sea was rough—there was only one passenger except myself: he was the counsel who had unsuccessfully defended Roger Casement. On the deck outside two Irish youths were talking. "Jimmy," cried one of them suddenly, "for the love of Mike, look! A German submarine—d'ye see it? Out there—look!" "Ah, stop yer jokin'," said the other. And apparently it was the youth's idea of a joke—not a very good one, I thought.

In Dublin, with its chief street in ruins, there was little to encourage a holiday mood. But, even in Dublin, one could not help feeling happy as one walked through midnight streets that were bright with light. After the darkness of London, Dublin with its flaming lamps seemed daylike. In the west, in Achill Island, it was as if the whole world had been restored to peace. There was not even a soldier or a coastguard or a ship in sight. I do not pretend that one forgot the outside world that was impossible—but I remember the time as a happy one—children collecting cowries on the strand, climbs up the fox-riddled mountain with a map of waters lying far below all around us, stonechats showing their fine colours in the sunshine along the roads, bogland and the smell of peat-smoke from the houses, talk and laughter and food—there were never before or since such lobsters. Even the cottages in which the living-room was at the far end a byre with a cow and hens in it breathing the same air as the plentiful children had a cheerful and cheering aspect. I do not know whether this consorting with domestic animals in the home still goes on; but, though I ought to have deplored it, I confess the sight of it gave me more pleasure than pain. For one thing, it was a novelty; for another, the cottages seemed to me unbelievably clean in the circumstances.

In the following year, 1917, people were still taking holidays as usual. I went to St. Ives for mine and found that it, too, was extraordinarily remote from the war in Europe. A few coast-watchers were to be seen, but the only thing they wanted to know was whether you had a camera. One of them, whom I met on a lonely part of the coast, had been on a ship that was sunk in the Dardanelles. He was sitting at his post, fiercely tearing a rope to shreds. He explained to me that, if he did not do this, he would go mad, as otherwise memories of the Dardanelles would come back to him. His only hope, he said, was to keep busy: so he sat hour after hour tearing at pieces of rope as a prophylactic against horror. After hearing his story, I took care no longer to walk in his direction unaccompanied.

Apart from things like this, however, and some silly rumours of treachery among the fishermen who were said by a few hysterical people to be storing petrol in buoys for the use of German submarines, St. Ives remained a free-and-easy town. A little excitement was caused by the arrival in the harbour of the injured crew of a ship that was torpedoed: when this happened, one girl, whom I overheard, went so far as to say to her friend: "Nothing would induce me to go to the pictures to-night." But that was only a ripple in a calm ocean. In the house in which I lodged a German, left in perfect freedom, was a lodger on the ground floor. My landlady, I must admit, though she housed him, was suspicious of him. She believed that he had some secret means of getting news from Germany, and declared that always, just before the news of a German success appeared in the English papers, the German seemed in especially high spirits and sat down at the piano and played a lively tune.

Still, it was easy during a large part of the day to forget Germany. In front of the bathing tents on the sand, old and young were lounging half-naked in the sun. Children dug and built castles as children had done in the summer of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. One was at perfect peace with the world as one idled round the harbour and listened to the pleasantly unpleasant voices of the seagulls echoing the creaking of hoisted sails. After a storm the gannets, whiter than ghosts, would arrive from the Welsh coasts; and what lovelier sight is there, except a salmon leaping, than a gannet diving from a height into tumbled waters? On the rocks off the shore cormorants stood, posing like

figures in an idiotic ballet. But the sea at St. Ives, even if it were as birdless as a Canadian lake, would be incomparably beautiful—a peacock spread of colour when the clouds break up and the sun rules the sky.

Undoubtedly, that is a good time to remember. There was unlimited butter, too—and Cornish cream as deserving of thanksgiving as the lobsters of Achill. Why is it that one always remembers food? Or am I baser in this matter than my fellow-men?

Of my last summer holiday of the war I can remember little that is agreeable: even the food was fairly hopeless by 1918. Unable to get away till November, I arrived at Littlehampton just as the great plague of influenza swooped on the town. Immediately, two members of my family were caught by the germ, and doctors were so few and so overworked that it was only with the greatest difficulty that I persuaded one of them to visit our lodgings. He was cross and at the breaking-point of fatigue, and he would do no more than promise to come if he could. I can remember little of that holiday, except visits to chemists' shops and meals at which a herring and a half was a luxury, with a raw onion eaten afterwards as a preventive of infection. It was at this time that I discovered that germs hate the smell of onions even more than fastidious women do. We who ate onions sat by the bedside of the invalids, and the germs fled at our approach as though we had been lepers.

The only pleasant memory I have of that holiday is the memory of Armistice Day. I was on my way to a chemist's shop when a man drove down the street in a gig, excitedly shouting: "Armistice signed." Soon after, every little boat in the harbour was hooting its joy. I was too anxious at the time to give myself up undividedly to rejoicing, but I remember with what a sense of liberation I sat down to dinner that evening in a room in which the blinds were up and the curtains undrawn and the lights above the table were left showing out to sea. To be able to show a light—that seemed just then to be one of the supreme luxuries of existence. The darkness that had enclosed us had vanished—vanished, we thought, for ever. That was surely one of the happiest illusions many of us have ever experienced. May it soon return! It is in itself a perfect holiday for the soul. Y. Y.

RILKE'S LETTERS TO THIS WAR

WHATEVER else happens, the Europe of 1918–40 is at an end. There cannot be a "victory" of the sort that the British and French seemed to envisage at the beginning of the war. There cannot be a super-Versailles or a super-Munich. Whether we like it or not, we are fighting for the entirely new situation which will arise if we are able to "hang on" until Germany collapses. That situation will demand remedies and plans and cures rather than crushing terms. The question is whether the other side can impose on us *their* kind of victory; whether the whole of Europe can become like Austria. It is against this that we are defending ourselves.

If Hitlerism could succeed in freezing history, it would mean that the value of existence was much less than we had imagined. Faith is notoriously what we most lack. Yet, beyond a certain point, it is impossible to lose faith without losing one's own existence. It would be impossible to believe, for example, that human behaviour could be reduced to that of bicycles, unless this was proved to one by the most crushing circumstances. It is impossible to believe in the Nazi "victory of a thousand years" unless one has the mentality of a Nazi already.

The great mistake is to think of the war in black-and-white terms of "victory" or "defeat." What is really important is the situation that arises from day to day during, and that will arise after, the war. I was thinking on these lines when the American publisher sent me a copy of Herter Norton's translation of the *Wartime Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke* (1914–1921). I already knew many of these letters, but reading the whole book I was astonished to discover how they seemed to apply even more to this war than to the last. Because for Rilke the Great War did not end, since the only end to it would have been the solution of the problems which it raised, and these were never solved.

Rilke is now recognised as one of the great European poets of this century, but during his lifetime he was known only to a discerning few. The outbreak of the war found him, at the age of 39, living at Munich. He was called up in 1916 and worked for a short while at the War Archives Office. Later he was allowed to give up this work and go on living by himself. Thus, even during the war he remained what he always was, an outsider, a wanderer, and a spectator.

During the very first days of August, 1914, he was caught up by the spirit of the time, but after these first poems, which he regarded as a lapse, the war had the effect of silencing him for ten years. If he had not at the end of that time produced the *Duino Elegies* and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, which are the finest fruit of his genius, one could not say with such confidence what would nevertheless still be true—that this silence of his patient waiting and of his quiet faith in himself, is a heroic episode in modern European literature. His letters show how single-mindedly during this time he devoted himself to the task of discovering "the valid and if possible somehow fruitful attitude towards the monstrous generality."

By October, 1914, he was already beginning to look forward to something other than mere victory for either side. The "fruitful attitude" for one in his situation, he began to discern, was to wait, keep silent, "hoping that in the end a word, an insight, may ripen in his soul that might be useful at the moment when the exhausted war collapses into itself, leaving the immense spaces it takes up to emptiness, stillness, a future that is to begin anew . . . . When?"

The conviction grew in his mind, and never again left it, that the war was a symptom of a betrayal of human values so deep that the poetry and art of a past tradition has the air of being lost in the present world of false news and unreality. In due course the world of material and destructive interests and false causes would collapse; then the opportunity would be offered of "confirming the existence of a further degree of hardness of life under this up-boiling death." To wait, patiently to realise in his own work the living tradition of the past, while all the time he was putting his inner life at the mercy of the withheld external event which the outer world could provide, must have been the hardest of all tasks:

> To me it is an unspeakable suffering and for weeks I have been understanding and envying those who died before it, that they have no longer had to experience it from here; for somewhere in space there will surely be places from which this monstrosity still appears natural as one of the rhythmic convulsions of the universe which is assured in its existence, even where we go under.

One needn't enter into Rilke's religious views to understand this, for it means equally that humanity has had standards and achieved a degree of understanding which includes even the most violent and monstrous events.

Rilke's own task was to discover in his contemplation "continuities that have nothing to do with the course of history"; where "even over the present vicissitude the furthest past and the furthest future will come to an understanding." The tradition, which was so remote from the present, was bound to be revolutionary. So when the revolutionary period came, Rilke had the single-mindedness to welcome it as "the conquering of abuses for the benefit of the deepest tradition." When this hope was disappointed, he wrote (December, 1918): "I have wished humanity nothing more urgently than that it might sometime or other be empowered to turn up an entirely new page of the future, on to which the whole wrong additions of the unfortunate past need not be carried over."

Rilke noticed, what is surely true, that in times of modern war and distress, even the quantity of suffering and death do not as in past times of affliction bring men face to face with the grimmer realities of human existence. We are not living in a tragedy, but in a period of commercial collapse with human victims, a disaster which no one understands and which therefore means very little, seeming a strange kind of accident with perhaps "economic" causes. When a country is destroyed no one who is not on the spot really believes in it. "An incessant equalising of all tension is created and humanity becomes accustomed continually to accept a world of news in place of realities."

During these terrible years a protest was ripening in him which he refers to constantly and which emerged in the great *Duino Elegies*. This was the idea of a cry, a lament, a complete admission of the intolerable nature of the dreadful "man-made" doom. "Why is there not *one* who cannot endure it any more, *will* not endure it any more; did he but cry out for one night in the midst of the untrue, flag-hung city, cry out and not let himself be pacified, who might therefore call him liar?" He recalls, with fierce joy, Rodin's deep mistrust of eventualities; and Cézanne walking down the streets of Aix, shrieking to his companion, "le monde, c'est terrible." These old men, who "went beforehand" like Old Testament prophets, "would have had the power now to weep before the peoples."

Of course, Rilke is wrong, as he well knew. It would not help to cry out. But here he certainly approached one of the chief problems of modern art. In a world in which people refuse to recognise what is happening, until they themselves are destroyed by it, it is no use making ineffective protests. The protest will either be ignored as hysteria, or it will assume a form which seems private and obscure

(as in the *Duino Elegies*, *The Waste Land*, *The Golden Bowl*, and so much modern writing which approaches the problem). It is better to be silent than to make life seem ridiculous, puny, obscure, a lost cause against the great mechanical causes of destruction.

There is one passage in these letters which seems to describe the moment when "the opportunity" for the "great benevolent forces" to break through seemed really to exist in flesh and blood. We hear for the first time the voice of humanity not from Rilke, but from the anonymous world of the common people outside. In November, 1918, Rilke went to a revolutionary meeting in Munich at which this incident took place:

> Suddenly a pale young worker stood up, spoke quite simply: "Did you, or you, or you, any of you," he said, "make the armistice offer? And yet *we* ought to do that, not those gentlemen up there; if we take possession of a radio station and speak, we common people to the common people yonder, there will be peace at once." I can't repeat it half so well as he expressed it; suddenly, when he had said that, a difficulty assailed him, and with a moving gesture towards Weber, Quidde and the other professors who stood by him on the platform, he continued: "Here, these professor gentlemen know French, they will help us to say it right, the way we mean it."

In the long run—for there is no strict analogy here with the immediate present—this is surely the only hope, and the fact that the voice should have been a German one is reassuring to-day.

These letters would convey little to us if they were simply the outpourings of a man through two phases of disillusion, during the war and, again, after it. Nor would they help if they were from a defeatist, a pacifist, a revolutionary, or a reactionary, though there are elements in Rilke of all these things. Why they seem so directed to *us* living at this time is because they are written by a man who did not think in terms of winning or losing or taking sides or opposing. What he had was an infinite patience and faith both in his own task and the task of humanity. For "What is more needed now than patience? Wounds require time and do not heal by having flags planted in them." He was not carried away by the idea of a victory or a peace aim or a defeat or a revolution. An aristocratic German, he never mentions either victory or defeat in these letters. He regarded the war as a disaster which offered men the opportunity to change their way of life completely, and he realised that if the chance was lost, humanity would again have to endure under the political banners and the newspaper falsifications, until another such upheaval offered another such opportunity. But above and beyond it all, this lonely and "indescribably benumbed" mind, believed in the power of humanity to emerge and be human:

> For the watershed of the war, horribly high as it was, must after all make possible an escape into the farthest and the new; and I tell myself that in the essential nature of upheavals like the one we are at present going through, there must also be at work a most profound rightness, a resolve of humanity as a whole: which indeed, when it gathers itself together, however clumsily, is always impelled again into the realms of divine powers, as a thing blind, but in all its good intentions blessed.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE BATTLE OF MENTONE

OTHER battles may await the historians of this war; the great battle of Mentone has already been fully described by Radio Roma, in celebration of the visit of the Duce to that field of glory this week. As it is destined to go down in Italian history as the most famous action of Italy's thirteen-day war with France, and the terrain is familiar to so many of us, it may be interesting to anticipate the historian.

Passing through Mentone a few days before Italy's war began, I was picked out by a French military intelligence agent as an obvious ally newly come from Italy. He asked me the usual questions. Unfortunately I had not noted regimental numerals and so forth, but he was good enough to say that my general account of the preparations on the Italian side of the frontier was illuminating. It will be still more illuminating in retrospect if I include some details which I did not tell him lest I should seem to be belittling his enemy.

Bordighera and Ventimiglia and all the villages and hillsides within a dozen miles of the frontier were crowded with troops of all kinds, bedraggled battalions route-marching, field and mountain batteries, detachments shifting dumps of big shell, guarding guns and gun emplacements. The massing of men, which had not varied greatly for some months, was in striking contrast with all that one could see in Mentone and on the French hillsides, a few sentries being the only evidence of what was in fact no more than a skeleton force, apart from the great fort above La Turbie. In striking contrast also was the appearance of the French and Italian soldiers, the former so much smarter and more serious of mien, the latter so careless and bored, and sulky and mutinous in their hearts.

"Our favourite game," one Italian from a detachment on the mountain frontier told me, "is darts. We use our bayonets, and a big picture of Mussolini pasted on the barn door. It is a game which gives us a certain satisfaction."

Others did not hesitate to say that they wished to God the war would start so they could surrender to the French and have done with it. An artillery officer said they called it the double salute—one hand up for Mussolini, the other for Hitler. In a single battalion of an Alpine regiment there were eight desertions in April and May, the men passing across the frontier to relations in France. The only way a certain mountain battery could be sure of getting meat enough once a week, a sergeant told me, was to give a mule all the corn it could eat, lead it to a mountain stream, and when it was swollen enough get the vet. to order it to be killed.

So much—and many more such details could be given—for the morale of the "heroes of Mentone." Now as to the terrain which the radio historian repeatedly called "the Alpine Maginot." The frontier rises steeply some 3,000 feet from the sea to a bare rocky ridge honeycombed on both sides with galleries. To take this by assault would have been a feat; but after describing it as "made impregnable by Nature and military art," the Roman chronicler of the battle left it at that and turned to events on the coast road and railway. "Meanwhile," he said, "a magnificent outflanking attack was undertaken by a direct assault on the fortified town of Mentone."

Mentone begins, as everybody who has driven that way knows, immediately on the French side of the bridge that spans the deep gorge of St. Louis. The whole of the bridge, however, is Italian, and they had even lately built up from a rock in the stream-bed a small building on the French side of the stream.

"After several days of tireless fighting against enormous odds," said the radio historian, "our gallant troops entered Mentone." That is, they walked across the bridge which, the account indicated, had remained intact. Nor was the railway severely damaged by "the pounding of the great guns from the southernmost fort of the Alpine Maginot," if they fired at all.

"Our infantry were supported by an artillery train which came through the tunnel under La Mortola and shelled the strongly held town in which the enemy was maintaining an obstinate resistance."

The town was evidently battered to pieces, for the description of what the Duce saw was convincing, or intended to be so, of the magnitude of the action. "A desolate sight presented itself to the eyes of the Duce in that once charming resort. The streets were littered with trees blown down by the power of our shells. The shutters of many shops in the main street had been blown in. The villas and great hotels stood gaunt and deserted with all the glass of their windows gone. Everything bore witness to the heroism of our conquering army on that bitterly contested battlefield."

Mussolini was evidently duly impressed by the evidence prepared for him some time between the 21st of June—the Italian account mentioned no fighting before that date—and the 1st of July when he visited the scene. For he sent a letter to the Prince of Piedmont, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the French Front, in terms which may well make some contentious historian of the future question whether it was the German or the Italian army which defeated France. The flamboyant character of the letter, broadcast the following evening, is sufficiently indicated by the words which introduced each paragraph of it: "Italians and foreigners must know that. . . ." The text was largely picked up from the radio account of the visit, including the description of that thinly held frontier as "the formidably defended Maginot Line of the Alps." He had visited other parts of the frontier, followed at every point by a picturesque broadcast of the scenes of battle he beheld, culminating with the Battle of Mentone—to impress the foreigner.

Exaggeration is to be expected from any such propaganda, but in this case it was so excessive as to suggest that there was more than one reason for this greatest war effort Italy has yet made. There was the obvious purpose, to claim a share in Hitler's victory over the French; but I suspect also a domestic purpose. Armies great in number and gorged with military supplies if not with food, were standing ready for zero hour. When that hour came it was of high political importance that they should act swiftly if they were to be in at the kill. Yet it took them nine days to move, and the glorious battle of Mentone only took place after the demand for an armistice. Something had gone wrong; there was something to cover up, something that needed all the weight of the most prodigious exaggeration to bury it. The Battle of Mentone may well go down to the future impartial chronicler as one of the biggest military frauds of history.

K. W.

THE MOVIES

"His Girl Friday," at the Regal
"Rebecca," at the Gaumont
"An Angel from Texas," at Warner's
"Behind the Guns."

Memories of the screen are apt to be slippery but among those that have lodged most of us would put *Front Page*. It came early among the films which make one grin and freeze the grin on one's face. The action was confined to the reporters' room in a prison on the eve of an execution; as the camera swung round a table of telephones and men relentlessly wise-cracking and playing cards there would come the practice thud from the scaffold outside or a stampede to the door at the whiff of news. If not unforgettable (for there have been innumerable variations of the "low-down" since), the scene at least drilled its way into one's marrow and leaves a twinge or two to-day. Such twinges were revived by the prospect of seeing *His Girl Friday*, which is what is known in Hollywood as a "re-making" of *Front Page*. It keeps the situation and some of the incidents, but otherwise it is a new film. A woman reporter (Rosalind Russell) has been introduced into this hitherto male inferno, and she and her editor (Cary Grant) add a touch of lighter, quicker Thin-Man comedy. Much of the horror, indeed, has evaporated, though not quite to the extent that killing became airy in *A Slight Case of Murder*. There are still chilling glimpses of the condemned man walking to and fro in an isolated wire-cage, and at one moment a girl bullied by reporters throws herself out of the window; they stand for a moment in silence looking down, then one of them shouts, "She's moved!" and there is a rush to suck the story out of *that*. Apart, however, from such moments *His Girl Friday* is tough, ironic comedy with the best dialogue that has been heard in a cinema for months, and the acting of everyone, from Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant down to the unnamed warder who accepts a bribe, is tip-top. Only America could have discovered films of this type and only Americans could go on with such zest producing more. In the evolution of the newspaper-racket film *His Girl Friday*, admirable though it is, has not yet reached the stage of the gangster film, in which the sentimentalities as well as the atrocities of gangsterdom are lit up with scarifying detail. We have yet to see the tender hearts of these grubby live-wire reporters.

It is always easier, in films, to shock than to stir emotion, and *Rebecca*, too, in its way sets out to be shocking. By slow degrees we are let into a situation where a shuttered room, a moving candle or a dog whining on a door-step will give us gooseflesh. A young girl without a penny, played with artful naivety by Joan Fontaine, marries a widower with a mysterious sorrow (Laurence Olivier) and goes to live on his ancestral acres. The house is almost as large as Knowle but considerably less attractive to the eye, and we aren't sorry at the end to see it burnt down. The new mistress finds herself wandering in endless halls, haunted by butlers and housekeepers, she sits alone with her husband at a breakfast table which shows him in a tiny perspective at the other end. They are in love, you must understand, so that these yards of table between them add a further touch of mystery to the story. Or perhaps they merely represent Hollywood's idea of the discomfort of being gentlemanly and rich. The real mystery, however, is concerned with the first wife, Rebecca, drowned in a boating accident, whose initial decorates every writing pad and piece of linen, and whose dead authority still haunts the house. Events unfold a tale of blackmail and possible murder, until finally the spectre is laid. Within the limits of a conventional and rather literary story, Hitchcock has brought off some good creepy effects, and the acting, particularly in the first half, warms our sympathies for the unlucky couple who have to undergo these mysteries. Miss Fontaine manages to be very English and very charming at the same time: a rarity in films. *Rebecca* will certainly bear seeing, though not thinking about afterwards. Whatever may be the attitude of Miss du Maurier's fans, no one who sees the film first is likely to be driven to reading the novel.

An Angel from Texas would surprise agreeably if one came across it unexpectedly as the second feature in a programme. On that level it is an amusing sentimental comedy of babes in the wood in New York. He (Eddie Albert) comes to town with an honest squirm and 20,000 dollars in his pocket, she (Rosemary Lane) with what she hopes will turn out to be a film face. They fall in with shady theatrical agents, litigating authors, and a pretty nest of gangsters. They take a theatre. Their show, in which they play the leads, is a success on the lines of *Young England*. Some of the incidents are funny, some aren't, and the show itself is awkwardly uncomic; still, *An Angel from Texas* aims low and for the most part hits where it aims.

We have been allowed so few good documentaries about the war so far that it was a pleasure to see the new Ministry of Information film *Behind the Guns*. It gives a thrilling picture of the work in arms and munitions factories; we watch the assembling of tanks, aeroplanes and warships. The director, Montgomery Tully, has shown imagination in building up this picture, and the faces and attitudes of the workmen are as striking as the war monsters they labour to perfect. *Behind the Guns* (unlike Cavalcanti's film of the balloon barrage) is being shown widely and at once.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Perseus," at the Arts Theatre
"La Sarazena," at the Neighbourhood Theatre

The music which Stanley Bate wrote to John Regan's choreography for the Ballet Trois Arts has been revived by the Arts Theatre Ballet, with a new choreography by Keith Lester. The original conception, though not altogether successful, rose more successfully to the challenge of the composer's violent heroic mood than one feels Keith Lester's mild traditionalism could ever do. He has, however, made a step forward in "Perseus." Harold Turner in the title role has some good dances, and the grouping is on the whole well managed. The passage across the stage of Perseus with his swelling train, between each scene, for which the music supplies a lovely motif, is a good idea, and there is some lively dancing in the revels of the last scene, though it is surprising to find Perseus' mother, Danae, taking such a Bacchantic part in it. Had the tyrant Polydectes persuaded her to become a dancing-girl? She is well danced by Joan Kent, but looks confusingly young. There is one very good touch, by which the choreographer links the end with the beginning. Before the opening scene, Pallas Athene displays her blank polished shield, and in the final tableau she again displays it, adorned with the Gorgon's head, while Perseus, a now unneeded instrument of the Gods, hides his face from his own conquest. Pamela Boden's decor, especially in the last scene, is very effective, though rather obscured by the smallness of the stage. There is also a regrettable discrepancy between the charming sketches for the dresses and the actual dress-making, so that they have not quite the lightness and movement which the sketches promised. We recommend a visit to "Perseus," and a second one to those who saw it only on the first night. The music alone merits this. It is well played under Leighton Lucas, by the small orchestral group formed by Stanley Bate, for which it was written.

The Neighbourhood Theatre, to which we owe the most interesting theatrical production in London, has now produced a young Spanish dancer, La Sarazena, who is well worth seeing, especially in her purely traditional dances. *Tierra Castellana*, *Fandanguillo* and *Jota Aragoneza* are a delight, and the dresses ravishing. She has a certain stiffness at times, which suggests origins not purely Spanish, but she is beautiful and accomplished and partly assuages the nostalgia she arouses in those of us who deeply love Spain and her great art. We hope she will dance again, and that her singer, Leonie Zifado, who has a most engaging personality and an exquisite voice, will add some real Flamenco to her repertory. They were assisted by a Russian guitarist, Alex Chesnakov, who was much appreciated, especially in a Ukrainian song.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, July 5th—
Protest Meeting of No Tax on Books Committee, Stationers' Hall, 4. Speakers include Sir Hugh Walpole (Chairman), J. B. Priestley, J. J. Mallon.
Councillors Silver and Murray: "The Lesson of France," Trinity Church Small Hall, Finchley Road, 8.

SATURDAY, July 6th—
Exhibition of Soviet Photography, 98 Gower Street. Till July 20th. 11—5.

SUNDAY, July 7th—
Dr. R. H. Thouless: "Christianity, Buddhism and Scientific Naturalism," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, July 8th—
"Once a Crook," Streatham Hill.

TUESDAY, July 9th—
Concert by the Ebsworth String Quartet, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1. 12.45.
Francis E. Pollard: "The Individual and his Significance," Friends' House, 1.20.
Bowl of Rice Dinner to celebrate China Day, Portman Rooms, Baker Street, W.1, 7.30. Speakers: H.E. The Chinese Ambassador, Dean of Canterbury. Tickets 5s. from China Campaign Committee, 34 Victoria Street.

WEDNESDAY, July 10th—
Prof. H. J. Laski: "The Death Penalty for Political Offences," Friends' House, 6.15.
Osmond Loewenfeld: "The Nature of Laughter," Conway Hall, 7.30.

Correspondence

MUST WE STARVE EUROPE?

SIR,—Last week the orders were published which formally included France in our blockade. Inevitably it now weighs upon all the peoples whom Hitler has subjugated. It closes their ports completely and stops their exports as absolutely as it prevents the importation of food and raw materials.

This new phase of the blockade calls for sober consideration. Some of these friendly and allied countries are in normal times dependent on imported food. France with North Africa can feed herself. Norway has an exportable surplus of fish, but has to import grain. Holland exports dairy produce but has to import grain, vegetable fats and cattle fodder. Denmark is in much the same case. A prolonged blockade would cause in these countries severe privation, which might mean starvation for the workers and the stunting of their children. Their sufferings will be aggravated by the unemployment that must result from our stoppage of their overseas exports. We must assume that in this situation the Germans will behave with their customary ruthlessness. They will draw from the countries they occupy whatever their own population lacks. This they have done already in Denmark and Norway. The result might well be that during the coming winter the Germans will have a sufficiency of food, while our own friends lack both food and work.

I am rash enough to raise the general question whether we have anything to gain by subjecting the

Continent to a hunger blockade. It is unlikely that Germany, with Hungary and the Balkan Peninsula under her control, can ever be starved out, even if Russia should disappoint her. The popular belief that our hunger blockade won the last war is, I think, a delusion. It would be more nearly true to say that it lost us the peace, for it left behind it a resentment which still distorts the life of Europe. Its effects, which I saw early in 1919 in Vienna, Warsaw and Berlin, were unimaginably cruel; an entire generation was stunted in body and warped in mind. But the collapse of German resistance in 1918 was due to other causes. First, the allies of the Reich, Bulgaria and Turkey, were knocked out in the field; they suffered no starvation. Secondly, the German armies were rendered impotent by their lack of oil, copper and rubber. In the last phase they had to fall back on horse transport, while their planes lay helpless on the ground when ours attacked. Our blockade was certainly decisive, but its military effects fell on the internal combustion engine rather than on the human stomach. We shall do well to tighten our blockade over oil, rubber and minerals, but my own vivid memories of those dark years prompt me to question whether we shall gain any military or political end by promoting hunger. Deprived of leadership and a free press, it is indeed likely that the Dutch, Belgians and Norwegians will blame us for their sufferings rather than the Germans. The French have their grievances against us already: shall we ever win back their friendship, if they can trace to us the hunger and unemployment that will afflict their towns? A tradition that goes back to Napoleonic times regards our sea-power as a menace to all Continental peoples; no great effort would be needed to revive it. But we have to look beyond the war in estimating the effects of our blockade. Hunger is a poor foundation on which to build a sane society. It leaves behind it its lasting psychological effects. After four years of privation, the Germans who created the Weimar Republic were in an abnormal mental condition, a prey to sudden moods of anger and despair, slow to construct and prompt to kill. In these neuroses the Nazi madness had its origin. The political and economic problems of the settlement will be difficult at the best: must we complicate them by a blockade that promises no compensating military advantage?

An alternative policy is not easy to frame. If we permit our continental friends to import food, can we be sure that their conquerors will allow them to eat it? How are they to pay for it, unless we also allow them to export, or to draw on their frozen balances? It is again well known that food may be a munition, for fats are an ingredient in explosives, and from grain and potatoes fuel-alcohol can be distilled. My suggestion is that in association with the exiled governments of these friendly countries we should approach Washington and ask it to work out with us a scheme as nearly harmless as may be, which will banish famine from the lands we failed to protect. What Mr. Hoover did for Belgium during the last war is proof that the problem is not insoluble. None of these difficulties are new. With a staff of American inspectors on the spot, it should be possible to ensure that most if not literally all the imported food shall reach these friendly populations, and that none of it shall be diverted to the making of munitions. The cost might be met by long-term loans. Such a scheme would not weaken the main purpose of our blockade: it would still deny to the enemy access to extra-European raw materials and markets. We dare not surrender any certain military asset. But it is doubtful whether by starving the workers of Europe we shall win their allegiance. Conceivably they may resent this exercise of our power. H. N. BRAILSFORD

[Mr. Brailsford's proposal would have our strong support if indeed he could frame a practical policy which would not play into the hands of the Nazis. Sugar, grain, fats and other foodstuffs are now readily turned into explosives, alcohol, lubricants and other munitions of war, and if Britain allows these to enter the conquered territories we see no practical means of preventing the Nazis seizing food they have to leave for the inhabitants of conquered countries whose labour they need.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

THE LESSON OF FRANCE

SIR,—It is curious to note the complete inadequacy of most of the articles on the collapse of France now appearing in the British press and written by French journalists who escaped to this country. When these journalists are Socialists, especially, they add blindness to the feebleness of their analysis. They cannot or they will not see that their own Front Populaire was one of the strongest factors in the development of pro-Fascism in France.

I have always maintained that foreign correspondents in France observed the repercussions of the Front Populaire Government only in Paris, and completely ignored the disillusionment, fear and anger which it provoked in the small provincial towns and the countryside. It is grotesque to suggest that the wealthy middle classes alone had pro-Fascist leanings. The horror of Communism, and the consequent disposition to resort to Fascism as the lesser evil, was equally felt by the very individualistic and numerically important class of *la petite bourgeoisie* and by a very large portion of the peasant class—and this horror was brought about mainly by the criminal weakness of the Socialist Government and the C.G.T., both of which allowed themselves to be terrorised and stampeded by the Communist Party that frenziedly preached class-conflict and class-hatred. Every Liberal who lived, as I did, in France during the Blum experiment witnessed reaction spreading as a result of its favouritism and utter inability to keep order. For a time the whole country was under the continual threat of the Uplifted Fist, of *la guerre de rue*, and of mass-government, and subjected to a disorganisation in finance, economics, social relationships and even ordinary *law* of which foreign journalists, hypnotised as they all were by the Front Populaire programme, gave their public hardly any inkling.

If defeatism existed, as it certainly did, in the middle classes, it also existed under the guise of pacifism in a very considerable section of the Socialist Party (a thing most Socialists carefully refrain from stressing); and if the middle classes, constantly assured that they would soon be violently dispossessed, began to lose their patriotism, what patriotism can be attributed to the French Communists, who took their orders from Moscow, voting in Parliament and acting in the Trade Unions exactly as Soviet Russia, a foreign Power inimical to their country, dictated? The Fifth Column in France was composed of Communists as much as of Fascists, and the defeatism they disseminated (ever since the beginning of the war, moreover, their propaganda was identical with that of the Nazi agents), "betrayed" France just as surely as the defeatism of the reactionary bourgeoisie. Both sides stank of treachery. Long before France met with defeat on the battlefield, her integrity and patriotic fibre were sapped, in the army as well as in the civilian population, by a monstrous disunity which the Socialist Government had brought to a head. Socialists have not the slightest right to gloss over these historical facts, and to attempt to put all the blame for the abject fall of France on their Fascist adversaries. They are quite as responsible as the latter for the rot which destroyed the will and power of their nation to resist.

London, W.1. ODETTE KEUN

SIR,—It is surely curious that THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION does not mention the French Communist Party manifesto, which must be having some effect in occupied France. One quite realises the anger and annoyance which the C.P. inspires, but actually it seems to have been considerably more far-seeing in certain directions than some of your own contributors, or than M. Blum. Who would have gathered from his speech to the Labour Party conference that the danger was from the Right? Yet no one so far has accused the Communists of this last great betrayal of France! Socialists and Communists find it as hard to get on as do members of the same family; they know too much about one another. Yet some kind of united front is essential now, especially when, as in the last few days, we hear Chamberlain raising his head again and explaining how completely in sympathy he and Churchill are. I trust that is a lie. But it is a bad sign at the moment. Perhaps the C.P. will not do any uniting now; if so that is stupid and unrealistic of them; but at least they are not among the defeatist elements in France, and that should be acknowledged. NAOMI MITCHISON

SIR,—May I take up a point which occurred to me when I read your editorial, "The Lesson of France," in your issue of to-day. With your observation that "we have still to create own dynamic" I respectfully agree. About what follows I am doubtful: "It must be social as well as national. Everywhere the aim should be to produce co-operation between the people and the authorities, to organise camps, communal feeding schemes, health centres, and farm colonies in joint popular and governmental hands, remembering the deep resentment growing in this country against the county, the squirearchy, and the old school tie."

In the first place, there is a lack of precision about such expressions as "the people" and the "old school tie" which seems a little unworthy of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. In the second place, I cannot see that a time of war is the proper time for organising health centres or farm colonies or camps, except for evacuees and refugees. A farm colony "in joint popular and governmental hands" could not, I think, serve any other purpose than that of wasting time and energy and land. But I seem to see more in the suggestion than this; an idea that these things are to be supported just because they will be distasteful to "the county" and "the squirearchy."

I am bound to say that your reference to these

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unfortunates seems to me anachronistic. There is a great body of resentment in this country, and ample reason for resentment; but I do not know that it is specially directed against the classes whom you indict. They are not the governing classes now, whatever they were a hundred years ago. They form only a very small proportion of the House of Commons. They were only a minority in Mr. Chamberlain's late Government and, on the whole, those who belonged to the "county" by birth showed more independence of judgment than those who did not. Are you not in danger of directing resentment against the wrong people and diverting it from those who deserve it, the civil servants of most departments?

And not civil servants merely: it appears to me that what we have lost is a sort of primitive energy and intelligence. We have lost it somewhere in the web of increasing bureaucratic control, of a semi-socialised industrial system, of "benefits" and "amenities" and "social services" showered on the just and the unjust alike. And the point at which we have lost it is this—when we cease to regard our own initiative, our own energy and intelligence as determining factors in producing the results we want.

Put more crudely, is it sensible to expect a nation in which self-help has become an obsolescent virtue to develop it suddenly in order to resist invasion? A man who has been taught to look to someone else as the source of action—his trade union, his county council, the F.B.I. or the N.F.U.—is not likely to be a very effective irregular. Moreover, although there is and has been a lack of the dynamic element in our thinking, that lack has not been confined to what one used to call the upper class. The stand of the Labour Party against conscription, as late as last spring, was as blind a piece of party politics as the stand of Mr. Chamberlain's Government in favour of non-intervention in Spain.

I think that you would add to the obvious services which THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is performing at present if you were careful to make it clear that the working class, as much as any other, must awaken to realities; and that success is a much more complicated matter than the mere condemnation and expropriation of a comparatively small number of landowners who, in my view (which I do not expect you to share) perform a useful function in society and certainly have not shrunk, as a class, from active participation in the fighting.

W. L. BURN

SIR,—I regret to observe a marked falling-off in cool-headedness and objectiveness in your "Comments." Surely these traits are more than ever necessary now that we are faced with a situation demanding, if ever a situation did in our history, sane thinking and realism? May I suggest that the following are fundamentals and *must* be given their true weight apart from heroics of the Duff-Cooper or Churchill types:

(1) The "Allies" are now reduced to *one* country, our own, with an Army/population basis, including Empire white man-power, of some 65 millions; against the Axis figure, not counting probable accretions such as Hungary or Spain, etc., of some 130 millions; meaning numerical inferiority of nearly 1 to 2 in "total" war.

(2) Preliminary to any thought of *winning* the war, two basic requirements must be satisfied; (a) Formation of a Continental-type Army of at least 6 million men, trained and equipped at least as well and heavily as the enemy; namely, with thousands of super 75-ton tanks, special battlefield bombing planes and the ancillary equipment of the enemy that we now know of to our cost; (b) Successful transport, without heavy loss, of this vast Army and its immense equipment, overseas to somewhere on the Continent from which it might successfully drive out the enemy from his conquered territories.

If these two fundamentals, and the endless related problems that surely I need not waste space upon, are examined dispassionately and realistically—as they must be examined if final catastrophe to our country and Empire is to be avoided—can you or anyone else honestly give a satisfactory answer or one that can enable us to go through the imminent hell of invasion of this country, with any real prospect of that final sacrifice containing the seeds of eventual victory? Surely needless to point out that a purely defensive measure such as even successful repulsion of invasion cannot possibly win the war; only those two fundamentals above can do that. Needless also to say that, with the enemy having all Europe at his disposal, and ourselves shut-off from its immense pre-war supplies, to even mention "Blockade" as a winning factor argues congenital insanity; even the extremely improbable participation of U.S.A. could only assist (a); the problem (b) would remain. Note that two far from certain factors are assumed O.K.; successful and continued repulsion of repeated invasion attempts; and a time-factor satisfactory to ensure (a) and (b), if indeed they are possible at all. Inexorable conclusions follow from this, and the necessary policy—if we have men of the moral courage required—is so self-evident that I need not enlarge upon it here.

J. DOUGLAS

[The answer to this letter is given in our leading article this week.—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

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THE FACTORY WORKER

SIR,—The remedy suggested by your correspondent V. B. is bound to fail unless the fears of management and the "lower grades" are abolished, and confidence and understanding established. When confidence and understanding have been established, there is no need for the intervention of a "government-paid go-between," as is proved by the experience of the rapidly growing number of firms where there exists the very state of things V. B. wishes to bring about.

I have been very closely identified with this question of industrial relationship for nearly twenty-five years, and if your correspondent cares to send me his name in confidence I shall be only too glad to discuss with him ways of meeting his difficulty.

Industrial Welfare Society, 14 Hobart Place, S.W.1. ROBERT R. HYDE, Director

NON-POLITICAL REFUGEES

SIR,—In the London Diary of your last issue there is an ambiguous remark which may give rise to misunderstanding and be the cause of unnecessary distress. You say we must have advisers to organise revolution in the territories conquered by the Nazis. These advisers will not be "non-political Jewish refugees or agents of foreign firms: such persons may be all reasonably regarded as political suspects." The remark might be interpreted to mean that most of the 60,000 German refugees in Great Britain who are non-political and who had to leave Germany because they were Jews or "non-Aryans," can be reasonably suspected. The distinction made between political and non-political refugees from Germany appears to be misplaced. The great majority of these 60,000 have been passed by the Aliens Tribunals after a judicial inquiry as "victims of Nazi oppression," and loyal to this country. Thousands of them are anxious to take their full part in the struggle for civilisation; some thousands have joined the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, and companies of them were marked out for special praise by their service with the B.E.F. in France. One of them, just back from France, told me how touched their companies were by the comradeship of the English soldiers who treated them as if they were British Tommies, and how depressed they were when, on returning to this country a few weeks ago, they found this prevalent spirit of suspicion of all aliens, however wholehearted they were in our cause. We should beware by any thoughtless word or excessive suspicion of filling up the cup of bitterness.

NORMAN BENTWICH

THUNDER ROCK

SIR,—I read with interest in last week's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION the account by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy of Robert Ardrey's inspiring play *Thunder Rock*. But I was surprised by his interpretation of Charleston's exit. Mr. MacCarthy's last sentence seems to imply that he is setting out actively to fight in our war against Nazi Germany, the declaration of which the audience has just heard on the wireless. The inference I drew was that Charleston was going out to lead and enlighten Americans, frustrated just as he had been by years of watching, helpless, the great advance of barbarism throughout the world. He was resolved to awake in his fellow-men the courage and determination that had been the sole factor in the advance of civilisation—and civilisation had advanced and always would advance, in spite of the despair and defeatism so rife in every generation. Streeter had rushed off impetuously and fought, but Charleston had a bigger job than that of the lone fighter.

ELIZABETH DOLL

GEORGE LANSBURY

SIR,—It is hoped that in quieter times an authoritative life will be published of my father-in-law, the late George Lansbury. No date can be fixed for this, but if material is not collected now it may quite likely be dispersed or destroyed.

With the authorisation of his eldest son and executor, I am therefore writing to you to ask that any of your readers who may have letters or other records of "G. L." which would be of value to his biographer would be kind enough to let me have them for that purpose.

Would those who are so kind as to do this please indicate very clearly those documents that they would like returned to them, and I will endeavour, if I can arrange it, to have them copied?

RAYMOND W. POSTGATE

SURREALISM

SIR,—Mr. Plomer notes with approval, "Surrealism has already served a prophetic turn, and nature has once more imitated art. The high explosives which are now going off everywhere were detonated first in the unconscious." Exactly. Surrealism, a vehicle of reckless upheaval and disorder, was not only, on the emotional and mental planes, an adumbration, but one of the advance guards of those forces of destruction that are now laying waste civilisation. Hence its insidious danger. Professing to liberate the mind of man, it merely liberates his chaotic forces—those that head for personal and race destruction: a confusion of mind on the part of the Surrealist arising from a failure to discriminate between the unconscious and the spiritual. It is impossible that the destructive force that is inherent in the movement could, through its so-called liberty, in any way "exalt man": all it can do is subtly to undermine his integrity of being. Mr. Plomer says that "culture . . . sustains hope, and invigorates the human heart." I agree entirely, but as the Oxford Dictionary's definition of culture is "the training and refinement of mind, tastes and manners," it can scarcely be used to describe Surrealism. Its whole motive is exactly the opposite of this definition.

18 Ovington Square, S.W.3. DORMER CRESTON

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE gardens at Chatsworth which contained so many strange exotic plants brought by the great gardener Paxton from foreign lands, could boast, too, of one modest daisy whose surname was Trimmer and whose Christian name was Selina. She was a governess of course, and when we think what it meant to Charlotte Brontë and to Miss Weeton to be a governess in a middle-class family, the life of Selina Trimmer redounds more to the credit of the Cavendishes than all the splendours of Chatsworth, Devonshire House and Hardwick Hall. She was a governess; yet her pupil Lady Harriet wrote to her when she became engaged, "I send you the enclosed bracelet. . . . I often think of all your past conduct to me with affection and gratitude not to be expressed. God bless you, my dearest friend."

Selina sheds light upon the Cavendishes, but outside that radiance little is known of her. Her life must begin with a negative—she was not her sister-in-law, the famous Mrs. Trimmer of the *Tales*. She had a brother who lived at Brentford. From Brentford then, about 1790, came Selina, up the great marble stairs, following a footman, to be governess to the little Cavendishes in the nursery at Devonshire House. But were they all Cavendishes—the six romping, high-spirited children she found there? Three it appeared had no right to any surname at all. And who was the Lady Elizabeth Foster who lived on such intimate terms with the disagreeable Duke, and on such friendly terms with the lovely Duchess? Soon it must have dawned upon Trimmer as she sat over her Quaker discourse when her pupils were in bed that she had taken up her lodging in the abode of vice. Downstairs there was drinking and gambling; upstairs there were bastards and mistresses. According to Brentford standards she should have drawn her skirts about her and flounced out of the polluted place at once. Yet she stayed on. Far from being vicious, the Devonshire House family was healthy and in its own way virtuous. No more devoted family existed. The children adored their mother. They were on the best of terms with one another. If the Duke was an indifferent father, his daughters were as dutiful as the daughters of any country parson. One person, it is true, all the children hated, and that was Lady Liz. But they hated her not because she was their father's mistress, but because she was corrupt; whining and cooing, false and spiteful. Could it be possible, then, that an absence of conventional morality brings into being a real morality? Were not the little girls, Georgiana and Hary-o*, who knew from childhood all the facts that are concealed from female Trimmers till they were married women, far less sentimental, less prudish and silly, infinitely more honest, sensible and downright than the middle-class girls whose virtue was so carefully shielded at Brentford?

These were questions that Trimmer must have pondered as she walked with her dubious brood in Hyde Park or escorted them to parties. They were asked everywhere. The courtyard at Devonshire House was full of coaches by day and by night. Nobody looked askance at them. So, while she taught the little Cavendishes their sums and their pothooks, they taught her; they enlarged her mind. They laughed at her and teased her and vowed that she was carrying on a love affair with Bob Adair. But for all that they treated her as if she were a woman of flesh and blood. There was only one class for the Cavendish children, and that was their own. Whatever their faults, and Hary-o always overslept, and could never read only one book at a time, the Cavendishes were the least snobbish of people. They treated her as an equal; they accepted her as part of their pagan and classless society. When the girls began to go out into the world they wrote as frankly and freely to their "dearest Selina" about their parties and their partners as they wrote to each other.

By the time they were going out into the great world, Trimmer was well aware of its dangers. She could take comfort in the fact that Georgiana and Hary-o were spared at least one temptation—they had not their mother's beauty. "I am delighted to be reckoned like mama," Hary-o wrote. "'A very bad edition though,' as an honest man said of me at Mrs. Somebody's party." They were short, fat, and rather heavy featured. But by way of compensation they had excellent brains. Their little eyes were extremely shrewd; in mind they were precocious and caustic. Hary-o could dash off a description of her fox-hunting cousin Althorp with a vivacity that any novelist might have envied, and with a worldly wisdom that would have done credit to a dowager.

> Althorp as he might have been, no reasonable woman could refuse or help loving and respecting. Althorp as he is, no reasonable woman can for a moment think of but as an eager huntsman. He has no more importance in society *now* (as he is, remember) than the chairs and tables. . . . Evenings and Sundays are to him a visible penance. . . . But when he appears at breakfast in his red jacket and jockey cap, it is a sort of intoxication of delight that must be seen to seem credible, and one feels the same sort of good-natured pleasure as at seeing a Newfoundland dog splash into the water, a goldfinch out of his cage, or a mouse run out of his trap. This is the man that I cannot wish to marry. . . .

Shocked, puzzled yet charmed, Selina stayed on. But she preserved her own standards. In that intimate society where every lord and lady had a nickname, Trimmer had hers. She was called Raison Sévère, Triste Raison, Vent de Bise. Lady Bessborough lamented ". . . rigidly right, she forgets that one may do right without making oneself disagreeable to everyone around." And Bess, Lady Elizabeth Foster, shivered in her presence. "Bess . . . says she always affects her like a North-East wind." Trimmer was no sycophant. By degrees she assumed the part that is so often played by the humble retainer; from governess she became confidante. In that wild whirling life of incessant love-making and intrigue she represented reason, morality—something that Hary-o as she grew up missed in her mother and needed. Mama, she owned to her sister when Duncannon pestered her, was "not prudent"; mama did not mind putting her daughter into a "most awkward situation." But Selina, on the other hand, "gave me a most furious lecture that my coquetry was dreadful, and that, without caring for my cousin, I had made him fall in love with me." It was "merely to enjoy the triumph of supplanting Lady E.," Trimmer said. Lady Harriet was angry at Trimmer's plain speaking, but she respected her for it nevertheless.

More and more, as Hary-o grew older, the extraordinary complications of Devonshire House morality involved her in tortures of doubt—what was her duty to her father, what, after her mother's death, to his mistress, and what did she owe to society? Ought she to allow Lady Liz to drag her into the company of the abandoned Mrs. Fitzherbert? "And yet I have no right to be nice about the company I go into; or rather no power, for I think no blame can be attached to me for that I so reluctantly live in." Strangely, it was not to the Bessboroughs or to the Melbournes that Hary-o turned in her dilemma; it was to Trimmer. Though companion now to old Lady Spencer, Trimmer came back to bear Harriet company at Devonshire House when Lady Liz was queening it there, saying "we" and "us" all the time, and fondling the Duke's spotted and speckled puppies in her shawl. Trimmer alone had the courage to show that the dogs bored her. Trimmer compelled the Duke and George Lamb to talk about "the Quaker persuasion and Mr. Boreham's scruples about giving the oath." In those tortured days Trimmer, "arch advocate of reason," was the greatest blessing to her distracted pupil. And it was finally to Trimmer that Harriet turned when the crucial question of her life had to be decided. Was she to marry her aunt's lover, Lord Granville? He had two children by Lady Bessborough. They had always been in league against her. She had hated him; yet there had come over her the spell of his wonderful almond-shaped eyes, and it would mean escape—from Lady Liz, from the ignominies and insults that her father's mistress put upon her. What was she to do? What she did was to marry Granville—"Adored Granville, who would make a barren desert smile." And it proved, on the face of it, an ideal union. Lord Granville became a model of the domestic virtues. Harriet developed into the most respectable of Victorian matrons, wearing a large black bonnet, setting up old orange women with baskets of trifles, illuminating book markers with texts, and attending church assiduously. She survived till 1862. But did Trimmer suffer a Victorian change? Or did Trimmer remain immutably herself? There was something hardy and perennial about Trimmer. One can imagine her grown very old and very gaunt, dwindling out her declining years in discreet obscurity. But what tales she could have told had she liked—about the lovely Duchess, and the foolish Caro Ponsonby, and the Melbournes and the Bessboroughs—all vanished, all changed. The only relic of that wild world that remained was the bracelet on her wrist. It recalled much that had better be forgotten, and yet, as Trimmer looked at it, how happy she had been in Devonshire House with Hary-o, her dearest friend.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

* *HARY-O.* The Letters of Lady Harriet Cavendish, 1796–1809. Edited by her grandson Sir George Leveson-Gower, K.B.E., and his daughter Iris Palmer. *John Murray.* 18*s.*

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As it is impossible to summarise the beliefs of twenty-three intellectuals, I have decided to take their attitude to religion, and more particularly to Christianity, as a peg on which to hang this notice. It is, I should say, considerably more favourable than it would have been had a similar book been prepared fifteen years ago. Let me begin with Beatrice Webb's contribution, which I rate with E. M. Forster's as the best of the bunch. Mrs. Webb makes a distinction between the sphere of the intellect and that of the emotions. The intellect is concerned with means and processes; its highest achievement is science; the emotions are concerned with ends. What we decide for ourselves, that is to say, depends mainly upon emotion, and in "the nobler type of men" such emotion is a link connecting the purpose of the individual with that of the universe. Or rather, it can be made so, if we pray. In prayer we

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enter into communion "with an all-pervading spiritual force" and discover "the purpose or goal of human endeavour."

Is this true? The question is an intellectual one and belongs, therefore, Mrs. Webb would say, to the sphere of science. To press it in the sphere of religion is illegitimate. But Mrs. Webb would have us act *as if it were true*, "selecting the hypothesis which yields the richest results in the discovery of truth or in the leading of a good life." This hypothesis is that of "a spirit of love at work in the universe."

Further than this Mrs. Webb does not go; refusing to profess any definite creed, she declares herself "a religious outcast." Like most of the intelligent English of her generation, she is in revolt against the attempt of priests and prophets throughout the ages to lay down in precise terms the nature of the supernatural world. Religion has always sought, and sought improperly, to intrude into the sphere of science, making statements about the history of man, the geography of the world and the nature of things which observers and research workers have subsequently shown to be untrue. Consequently, as Sir Arthur Keith points out, "of the men and women who have contributed to these pages, none regards the Creator—God the One, Omnipotent and Personal—as having the form and properties set forth in the Book of Genesis." The truth is that Mrs. Webb's generation has inherited a suit of spiritual misfits which it has very properly refused to wear. But it is a sad, not a glad refusal. Mrs. Webb deplores the decline in the regular practice of religion, while the absence of religious belief has "led to an ugly chaos in private and public morals and to a subtle lowering of the sense of beauty."

With the denials of Mrs. Webb's creed, E. M. Forster may be taken as in general agreement. Organised Christianity, he holds, is incapable of coping with the present mess, its appeal being based on its financial rather than on its spiritual strength. "It was a spiritual force once, but the indwelling spirit will have to be restated, if it is to calm the waters again." Quite so, says Thomas Mann. Christianity has done good service in the world and is still streets ahead of its modern adversaries; but the Christian impulse is exhausted; nor can we suppose that the men of the future will be content with the traditional "Christian dualism of soul and body, spirit and life, truth and 'the world.'" Christianity, in fact, is not the last religious word, and will be transcended.

To the debit account of Christianity we must add a revolt against the hatred of the flesh fostered by the Puritanism which dominated the Christian field in this country for over 100 years. Rebecca West is chief spokesman of this anti-Puritan revolt. Cruelty, she maintains, is the root of all vices, and cruelty is largely a by-product of repressed instincts and desires. Conversely pleasure is at once the standard and the test of value. "I take it," says Miss West, "that the prime cause of the present confusion of society is that it is too sickly and too doubtful frankly to use pleasure as the test of value." Now the repression which has cruelty as its by-product, the Puritanism which shuns pleasure for fear of debauchery, are both offshoots of Christianity, and Miss West, whose contribution is strongly influenced by the teachings of psycho-analysis, gives the impression of still being engaged in the early twentieth-century revolt against the stuffiness and respectability of the nineteenth. Almost, if I might dare to say so, she strikes one as pre-war in the nineteenth-century use of the word "war." For the wheel has turned full circle; Freud is no longer fashionable, Jung is *vieux jeu*, while to-day we are more inclined to stress the happiness of duty than the duty of happiness.

With its dogmas gone, with its organisation discarded and its Puritanism disavowed, what of Christianity remains? Broadly the answer would seem to be, its ethics. We should live as Christ enjoined without invoking supernatural machinery to enable us to do so, and, having jettisoned the Almighty, nevertheless retain the sanctions which only His presence in the universe has hitherto been thought to justify.

And first of all, there are personal relations. "Personal relations," said Helen in *Howard's End*, "are the real life for ever and ever." Our world is no longer Helen's, but the truth remains. In fact Mr. Forster puts it in the forefront of his creed as the most important truth of all: "I hate the idea of dying for a cause," he writes, "and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country."

Mr. Forster further disbelieves in belief, acknowledges Montaigne and Erasmus as his teachers—only they do not teach—dislikes great men, declares that force is necessary in society, but that it should stay in the background, and maintains that what we need is not more goodness but only the better organisation of the goodness that exists. As one might expect, the most distinguished and the most civilised contribution in the book. Personal relations, then, in a civilisation which is collapsing are what is real and what matters, and, as several contributors insist, our first duty to-day is to be kindly. Reflecting upon the vast increase in our powers, M. Maritain rightly points out that they will destroy us, unless we can learn to be nicer to one another. It is love and good will that our world needs; without them, as he rightly points out, man's cleverness becomes a curse and destroys the civilisation which it has built.

Beyond personal relations there are values. There may not be God, but there is truth; there is beauty, and there is goodness, which used to be called the modes of God's manifestation to man. It is in man's power to recognise them that *his* value lies. Deny their reality, deny their recognition by man, and there is no escape from the despairing cynicism which man's "fantastic vileness," as Mann calls it, seems to justify. It is at this point that one realises to what extent the twentieth century has reversed the optimism of the nineteenth. We cannot to-day any longer worship man; we have only to consider what he does. But if we cannot see much goodness in human beings, we can at least recognise in them the power to recognise what is nobler than themselves, a power which—I am quoting Thomas Mann—is "revealed in the shape of art, science, the quest for truth, the creation of beauty, the conception of justice."

There is no return to religion here in any orthodox sense of the word, nothing to justify the view that God is the coming man, but there is a new realisation of the needs which religion satisfied but satisfies no longer, and a renewed acceptance of the principles of Christian ethics. Even John Strachey is found to be surprisingly asserting that the Christian and the Marxist "at bottom stand for the same thing." They both, that is to say, believe in "the infinite worth of every human being" as against the Nazi heresy which would degrade man to the status of a tool of the State.

Let me try to summarise very briefly, adapting them from M. Maritain, what I take to be the specifically Christian concepts to which most of these writers would subscribe. First, that it is not enough to contemplate the world and our kind; we must seek to improve the world and to love our kind. Secondly, that action is not in itself a good, nor is there any merit in labour as such. Action which is service to our fellows

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is alone valuable; labour must be for others. Thirdly, all men and not merely a few privileged persons, whether Platonic philosophers or Nazi supermen, are of value. An individual, in fact, is neither an ant in a social termitary, nor a cog in a proletarian machine, nor a drop of blood in an ocean of racial purity, but an end in himself possessing a soul, possibly immortal, with a right to self-development and happiness in this world and a chance of salvation in the next. Nor can any fancied right of the State take precedence of this right of the individual.

Inevitably I have left much out of this review; the persistent reasonableness of Lin Yutang, a survived eighteenth-century encyclopaedist, who reveres science, is devoted to beauty, and upholds morals without God; Bertrand Russell pleading for tolerance, upholding democracy and begging reasonable men not to forsake reason in a world gone mad; and W. H. Auden also praising democracy, liberty, justice, reason and the rest, and bidding us defend them even "perhaps with our lives." The general level of contributions is high and the book was well worth the trouble of producing as a testament, perhaps the last, to the new civilisation when it comes, of the beliefs and values of the intellectuals in a civilisation that is near its death.

C. E. M. JOAD

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Time was, not so long ago, when this would have been a sensational book. To-day, so quickly and violently has the standard of cruelty and repression risen in the world that Mussolini's persistent persecution of the Treves family seems comparatively mild. The book should not be read or advertised primarily as an example of Fascist brutality; it is rather a story, intensely interesting in itself, of the effect of repression on sensitive people.

Dr. Paolo Treves begins his narrative with Matteoti's murder in 1924. He was a boy in his 'teens, living what now looks to him a free and happy life, devoted to his father, Claudio Treves, who was the editor of a great Italian newspaper, a Socialist deputy and a close friend of Matteoti. Claudio escaped to Paris where he continued the anti-Fascist campaign with the Rossellis, who were afterwards murdered outside Paris. Paolo Treves remained in Italy, a hostage, permitted to work as a student under constant police supervision. One of the most puzzling things in the story is to explain why Mussolini—for he had a personal hand in the persecution—thought it worth while to use two police officers night and day for years together to watch and follow one boy. Paolo tried to study and succeeded; the police waited outside libraries and class-rooms. He even went for holidays—always in company with the police. He even tried an Alpine holiday and was only stopped when too near a pass over which escape was possible. He and the police got on none too badly, though they always wanted him to go to the cinema and had strong words with him when he took opportunities of giving them the slip. He got beaten up by Fascists when he took part in a student anti-Fascist demonstration, and was put in prison later when he thoughtlessly signed a letter of congratulation to Croce. Prison was after all only the closing in of the walls; he had been psychologically in prison, under the constant supervision of warders, ever since Matteoti's death and his father's exile. He is at his most interesting in describing the terrible difficulty of studying and writing in this atmosphere, the moods of despair, the deep loneliness, cut off from his family and constantly watched. Prison itself was merely a further stage. It was unutterably filthy. He grew ill and exaggerated his illness for policy's sake. The doctor, a college professor, was sympathetic and helped him. Finally he pretended a nervous breakdown which took him to a mental home instead of to "the Islands." He was finally released and eventually, in 1932, escaped to Paris in time to see his father before he died. He went back to Italy and continued the fight in the conditions possible to anti-Fascists until September, 1938.

The central theme of this book is the failure of the Fascist regime to break the spirit of a boy inspired by his father's example. Paolo Treves keeps his father always in the centre of the picture. He loved his father passionately—all the more because in his absence his father was the symbol of freedom and the inspiration of the fight against tyranny. It was not so much the police or Mussolini or the prison cell he feared, but rather, lest in his loneliness he should lose faith and courage and not stand firmly for the causes to which his father had devoted his life. Perhaps it would have been better if he had thought less about his father: anti-Fascists must think freshly and not live in the nineteenth century. But fundamentally he was right. The inspiration of the future must come from men like Claudio Treves who worthily represented the best in the past.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

BOSWELL RETOUCHED

Johnson Without Boswell: A Contemporary Portrait of Samuel Johnson. Edited by HUGH KINGSMILL. *Methuen.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Boswell was a born interviewer; in an age not of reason but of newspapers, editors would have fallen over themselves to hand him their gossip page. The fact that he went on for twenty years interviewing the same man has rather sidetracked our view of him. Such an adherence fascinates in itself. We read him on this and that; in chunks, forwards from the first meeting, backwards from the death; and in and out of season, with a sort of affectionate and cocky deference, the little man comes up smiling. Assiduously he circles, darts forward to press the button on the fount of wisdom; and Johnson spouts. Sometimes it is the Johnson of the Parliamentary Debates, argumentative in the grand manner, and the cadences fall queerly when the subject is puns or the Cock Lane ghost; sometimes the humbler struggler of the Meditations, or the author of playful, affectionate letters to women. Johnson on death, Johnson in the Hebrides, Johnson bellowing at midnight in a court off Fleet Street—what a scoop! When the Doctor shows signs of flagging Bozzy starts up with his But and Don't you think, sir, and some of his questions, patiently or pompously replied to, would liven any Sunday newspaper. "If, Sir," he suddenly interposes one evening, "you were shut up in a castle, and a new-born child with you, what would you do?" To this idiotic question Johnson sensibly replies, "I shouldn't much like my company." But the gossip-writer is not so easily satisfied. Several moments later Johnson is still having to respond to prodding. "... I should feed it, and wash it much, and with warm water to please it, not with cold water to give it pain." Boswell: "But, Sir, does not heat relax?" Johnson: "Sir, you are not to imagine the water is to be very hot. I would not *coddle* the child. No, Sir, the hardy method of treating children does no good, etc., etc." When we come to such passages (and *Boswell* is full of them) we can only wish vehemently that Johnson had never let himself be nobbled by this *famulus* who was also the most shameless of copy-hunters. True, we owe to Boswell

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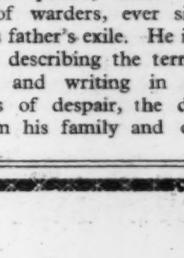

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a deeper thankfulness than to any other man of his time below the first rank; but it is qualified by irritation and a mild contempt. That he, of all persons, should have been able to influence and steer Johnson in his old age (we tend to forget that *Boswell* is the portrait of an old man) robs his reporting of some of its riches. The sharpest picture of the two men, by the way—and it helps to smooth our resentment—is given by Fanny Burney. Her description of a lunch party at Streatham is delicious:

> In truth, when he (Boswell) met with Dr. Johnson, he commonly forbore answering anything that was said, or attending to anything that went forward, lest he should miss the smallest sound from that voice to which he paid such exclusive, though merited, homage. But the moment that voice burst forth, the attention which it excited in Mr. Boswell amounted almost to pain. His eyes goggled with eagerness; he bent his ear almost on the shoulder of the Doctor; and his mouth dropt open to catch every syllable that might be uttered; nay, he seemed not only to dread losing a word, but to be anxious not to miss a breathing; as if hoping from it, latently or mystically, some information.
>
> But when, in a few minutes, Dr. Johnson, whose eye did not follow him, and who concluded him to be at the other end of the table, said something gaily and good-humouredly, by the appellation of Bozzy, and discovered by the sound of the reply that Bozzy had planted himself as closely as he could, behind and between the elbow of the new usurper and his own, the Doctor turned angrily round upon him, and, clapping his hand rather loudly upon his knee, said in a tone of displeasure, "What do you there, Sir?—Go to the table, Sir!"

And "Bozzy," ears pricked to the sound of his master's voice, scuttled back to his proper place. That passage will give pleasure to everyone who has been reading a little too much in Boswell's *Johnson*, who has come—however temporarily—to resent the possessive of the title and the insinuating presence of the author. Johnson without Boswell—it's hardly possible, of course, but there is no reason why we shouldn't have a Johnson without too much Boswell. This Mr. Hugh Kingsmill gives us in his anthology from contemporary records, and our only complaint is that it might have been a good deal fuller. The passage from Fanny Burney, for example, quoted above, has been missed.

Mr. Kingsmill has arranged his pieces chronologically so as to form, roughly, a biography in anecdote. His chief sources have been Johnson's own writings and letters, the lives by Hawkins and Murphy, and the reminiscences of Mrs. Thrale. Thus we have glimpses of childhood and youth as well as the twenty-five years in London before his meeting with Boswell. He is born, marries and dies within the space of 285 pages; and this fact in itself readjusts our perspective of him. Women, too, are seen to play a larger part in a life which Boswell shows chiefly in after dinner reverberations; his love for his mother and for his wife, which haunted him always in moments of solitude, is given here something like its right proportion. And we are reminded again that the friendship with Mrs. Thrale was the prop of his later years. Her marriage to Piozzi broke his health and he died five months after: no dereliction on the part of Boswell could possibly have affected Johnson as deeply as this. To deny intimacy to Boswell's pin-point portrait would be absurd, but reading it we feel that it is an intimacy run in grooves, that it grasps the talk but not the silences, that surprise has been ruled out. Sketchily, glancingly, this little anthology does bring us nearer the centre of the life of a man who was at the same time more social and more lonely than most. The difference between Johnson soliloquising in the letters chosen by Mr. Kingsmill and Johnson soliloquising in the conversations chosen by Boswell is at times striking. The publisher claims that Mr. Kingsmill has pieced together "the more human and moving" figure, and in a small degree—allowing that Boswell is *there*, immovable as Stonehenge—this is true. And women, as might be expected, contribute the most telling strokes to this retouching of a familiar portrait. The passages one marks to re-read are those of Mrs. Thrale, Miss Burney, Miss Reynolds (sister of Sir Joshua), and the lady best known as the Swan of Lichfield.

G. W. STONIER.

THE GENTLE ART OF OBSTRUCTION

Filibustering in the Senate. By FRANKLIN L. BURDETTE. *Oxford.* 15*s.* 6*d.*

The United States Senate normally enjoys the right to unlimited debate. The only closure procedure depends upon a motion, signed by sixteen Senators, asking that discussion on a measure be ended. To be carried, the motion must, after a day's discussion, be supported by a two-thirds majority; and, even after its adoption, every Senator may speak for one hour on the subject involved.

On this amazing situation, which puts an immense premium on obstruction, Mr. Burdette has written an amusing and valuable book. He has combed the records for examples, and they make Parnell and his legionaries shade into insignificance. The famous Randolph of Roanoke, who, discussing a bankruptcy Bill, discoursed on unitarianism, family Bibles, the university presses of Oxford and Cambridge; the exploits of the late Senator La Follette, who still holds the record, with a continuous speech of eighteen hours; the efforts of the late, but unlamented, Henry Long, who in speaking of the N.R.A. gave biographies of Frederick the Great and Judah P. Benjamin, recipes for fried oysters and "potlikker," and invited the Senate to offer him subjects for further discussion; a "filibuster" of 1937–8 on the Anti-lynching Bill which lasted for six weeks; these are only outstanding instances.

The English student who reads Mr. Burdette's catalogue is tempted to throw up his hands in despair. The answer to his bewilderment is simple. The "filibuster" arises, in part, from the fact that there is no executive direction of the Senate; it arises, in part, also from the lack of any coherent party organisation there. Every Senator is an individual politician on his own, and the rules enable his personality to be protected from the tendency of organisation to suppress the opportunity of full discussion. Undoubtedly, it has often had useful effects. It prevents dangerous legislation from being rushed to the Statute-book. It secures the proper inspection of proposed legislation. It offers an assurance that the views of the minority will not be overridden by the drilled battalions of the majority. Not least, as Professor Lindsay Rogers has persuasively argued, the "filibuster" is an avenue to those magistral investigations by the Senate which have been one of its supreme contributions to the well-being of the American people. Granted that the Senate was deliberately intended as a check on the executive power, unlimited debate is a vital technique for this purpose.

Mr. Burdette himself clearly feels that filibustering is pursued excessively. He would like to see the adoption of a closure system built upon the time-tabling of debate. The answer, of course, to his proposal is that this would defeat the very purpose obstruction has in view, since it would result, unless the time-table was very wide, in something like government by the majority-party caucus. Alternatively, if a two-thirds vote for the time-table were demanded, I suspect that it would not often be secured. Senators rightly feel that the looseness

What is a luxury?

When we read the leading article in last week's issue of this paper our first thought was to sack our staff and close down "for the duration." In this leader the writer said: "We cannot now afford the luxury of a dozen types of aircraft and tank, of tailor-made clothes, of chocolate and of branded goods."

What nonsense to talk of tailor-made clothes being a luxury. We know a man who used to buy a dozen cheap ready-made suits at a time, casting them off after a few weeks' wear. That is luxury, and only a rich man could afford it.

Is it suggested that to take perfectly good materials, throw them together with fourth-rate workmanship, and then ask men to wear what will give them neither confidence nor comfort, still less durability, is the patriotic thing to do even in our present emergency? Surely this is sheer nonsense.

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of their procedure is, with all its possible abuses, one of the methods by which they are best able to protect their status in the American system. Mr. Burdette constructs a strong case against obstruction, because it is of obstruction only that he writes. But, to see it in its due proportion, he ought to have noted the immense amount of patient, cogent and rapid work performed by the Senate. With all its faults, it remains one of the great successes of the American Constitution.

HAROLD J. LASKI

EAST AND WEST OF SUEZ

Mauretania. By SACHEVERELL SITWELL. *Duckworth.* 15*s.*

Once In Sinai. By J. M. C. PLOWDEN. *Methuen.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Sitwell's journeys are, unfortunately, subservient to a very exact time-table which his desire immeasurably outruns. Even the lightning flight to Ghadames and Tabunia proposed to him by Marshal Balbo during a breathless night talk, of which he gives an amusing and vivid account—even this allurement was refused because "we had been away from England so long and it was imperative to hurry back." (Indeed this was on the very brink of the war.) One of the most delightful chapters in Mr. Sitwell's book, "A Summer in Tunisia," proves him to be an ideal loiterer, but he is always condemned to haste away, casting a long lingering look behind—at gipsies in Rumania; unvisited Roman cities in Mauretania; dancers, reported of matchless beauty, in a distant, forbidden valley in the gorges of Todra. This nostalgic note is familiar in all his travel books, for he is after all as romantic as the young Frenchman, Michel Vieuchange, to whom in 1930 the mysterious town of Smara in the then dissident Sud-Marocain had become an obsession, a mystic goal, and who, after setting foot in it for one hour, disguised as a Berber woman, returned to Tiznit to die of the hardships of his journey. This was in 1930. Mr. Sitwell's glimpses of the Sud-Marocain in 1939 were authorised. He had a military escort, and all difficulties were smoothed away, except bad weather, which still is sometimes *insoumis*. If one has lived in Morocco, and deeply loved certain aspects of it with which the author did not have time to become acquainted, some parts of his book will seem rather inadequate; but it was, of course, never intended as a guide, and those who delight as much as I do in the furniture of his mind, and the splendour of his imagination, will wish that he had forgone the curious ritual tribute he now and then pays to a purely formal completeness (as in the descriptions of Mirsa Matrûh and Siwa, in Egypt, which are as perfunctory as Baedeker and as lacking in personal experience) and had only written about what stirred his imagination. How wonderful, for instance, his description of the mosaic in the museum at Leptis Magna, representing the Roman gladiatorial games; and of Sabratha, one of three Carthaginian settlements in Libya, taken by Rome and held by her for five centuries:

> It was an aesthetic experience without parallel to walk among these marble ruins on the level of the sea floor. The courts of the temples, were this not the tideless sea, would be washed, night and morning, by the surging or retreating waves. The stones would be green with sea moss. The limpet shell would crawl along the pavements. But those worlds never meet. They lie close to one another; and their incomparable beauty comes to them from this.

Leptis Magna carries his imagination to Baalbek and Ephesus, to Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, to the Olympieum at the foot of the Acropolis, to Delphi, to Epidaurus, to Antioch and the yellow Orontes. These are splendid passages of mingled visual and literary inspiration. Equally good, in lighter vein, is the lovely description of a harem bathing in the sea. "The ladies of the harem wading in a kind of tent that moves with them and shelters them from sight." "From far off, it is a commotion comparable to the hauling in of a line of heavy fishing-nets, or the launching of a lifeboat." One would like to quote so many other passages which only Mr. Sitwell could have written. But they will be better read in the context of his book.

Once in Sinai is also the record of a short journey, rather casually but very competently undertaken by a solitary woman traveller, across the peninsula of Sinai from Suez to Akaba, which T. E. Lawrence has made for ever famous. She almost courted failure by engaging her guide and camels from the tourist Arabs round the Pyramids; for it is, as Major Jarvis, late Governor of Sinai, explains in his congratulatory preface, an age-old custom among the Bedouin that the traveller hires his guide and transport from the tribe in whose territory he is travelling; which, in Sinai, would in fact involve changing guide and camels every twenty-four hours. It was not the plausible and mendacious Musa who brought her safely through (he did not even know the way), but a chance-met Bedouin guide and her own indomitable spirit of delight in the desert and all that it brings forth:

> My friends were picturing me as a comfortless albeit a voluntary exile, but I knew it was I who was comfortably at home. Indeed, I was at home in time as well as in space; . . . I was being royally entertained at the oldest hearth in the world, even lit by a flint and tinder; my host had given me to drink in his most precious because his only cup; I had a saddle for a couch, and for night-lights the whole array of stars.

Little more than a year ago the Convent of Santa Caterina at Mount Sinai was a favourite long week-end trip from Cairo—not, of course, by camel; but one is glad to realise that this glorious landscape is too stern and rigorous ever to become a tourist's country, though in its "brief and magical spring, when grass and flowers are conjured from the rock . . . the wilderness wears such a serene and gracious aspect that to wander there for forty years were not an unwelcome condemnation." Madame Jullien (J. M. C. Plowden) was indeed only a super-tourist, for she knew no Arabic, and was bound by time, so that she did not actually climb Mount Sinai, which Harriet Martineau a hundred years earlier had been far too thorough to miss, for all her holland skirt, ribbon trimmings, fan and goggles. But she has the intelligence, resourcefulness and staying power of a real explorer and her book has a value far greater than a merely delightful record of an audacious amateur escapade.

Both books are disappointing from the point of view of illustrations; only one of Mr. Sitwell's photographs bears evidence of having been made expressly for this book, and Mme. Jullien's defective films ruined many of her best pictures, a misfortune with which every solitary traveller will sympathise. BERYL DE ZOETE

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SPANISH ROMANTICS

The Romantic Movement in Spain. By E. ALLISON PEERS. *Cambridge.* 2 vols. 50*s.*

Grand Inquisitor. By WALTER STARKIE. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 18*s.*

Professor Peers has been well advised to leave Spanish politics, where he is quite out of his depth, for Spanish literature, where he possesses a large store of information. His history of the Romantic Movement in Spain is an admirably detailed and scholarly work, well

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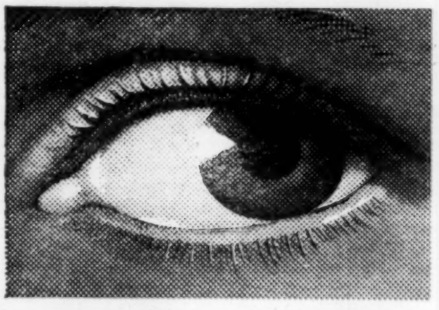

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stocked with quotations and containing ample footnotes and appendices.

The scheme of the book is simple. Starting with the humble origins of the movement in the eighteenth century, Professor Peers traces it as far as 1860, when the main stream broadens out. He describes its fusion with "eclecticism" and charts year by year the progress of its struggle with the completely sterile classic forms of the eighteenth century.

As an *histoire de moeurs* the result is extremely interesting. As a history of literature is has one drawback—that none of the writers of this period can any longer be read for pleasure by the ordinary reader with the single exception of the witty and unfortunate Larra. When Verlaine wrote his famous *Prends L'éloquence et tords lui le cou* he killed not merely Musset's verse and a large partof Hugo's, but Espronceda, Zorilla and the Duque de Rivas as well. The outstanding figures in Spanish nineteenth-century literature, Bécquer in poetry and Pérez Galdós in the novel, do not begin writing till the sixties.

It is rather interesting to inquire why this should be so. The Romantic Movement everywhere produced a vein of thin voluble writing that impressed contemporaries but which bores us: the political Utopianism of the time was paralleled by a poetical Utopianism that had often very little sustained or directed feeling behind it. Literature became an affair of Youth Movements—that is, of people who have little experience of the past to draw on. Yet in spite of this, England, France, Italy and Germany all produced good poetry whilst Spain did not. Her poets were never more than rhetoricians imitating foreign models or pastiching Calderon, and instead of the novelist there was the insipid *costumbrista* who sketched "types" and wrote up local colour.

I believe that the cause of this failure may be found in political and economic conditions. The second half of the eighteenth century saw Spain struggling ineffectually with five-year plans: the writer tended to be the man who had written a monograph upon manures and who scribbled pseudo-classical verse in his spare time. Then came the terrible period of the Napoleonic Wars and of the reaction that followed it, which reduced the economic and intellectual life of the country to the lowest ebb. Romantic literature, when it came in the thirties, was naturally associated with the new political ideal—liberalism. The pessimistic, disillusioned, Byronic note might be there, but the chief idea it brought was that of liberty. Liberty for what? Here it found itself in the same predicament as political liberalism: it had and could have no constructive programme and no driving force because the soil in which it arose was too thin to sustain it.

Liberalism in Europe marked the arrival of a new class in power and of a new form of economic organisation—capitalism. In Spain it also marked the arrival of a new class, but the industrial movement that should have accompanied this class and given it a function did not come into existence. This new middle class, therefore, to consolidate its power turned to the land and brought about an agrarian revolution. They broke up and appropriated to themselves the estates of the Church and the immense common lands which the aristocracy had been too weak or too lethargic to touch, set up a ruthless rural constabulary to suppress the peasant risings that followed and settled down into their new role of absentee landlords. It is this sense of having no constructive mission, of being at bottom completely impotent, that gives Spanish liberalism of the twenties and thirties its shrill, excitable tone. I suggest that the failure of Spanish Romanticism is due to similar causes.

Another consideration. Spain is a poor country and the poet or young novelist must as a rule support himself by journalism. The competition is enormous, because it is commoner in Spain than in England for young men of talent to seek fame by literature. Success goes to those who are fluent and adaptable. But the best poetry of the Romantic Age has been the result of prolonged self-concentration, of slow distillation of the poetic fluid drop by drop. The one Spanish poet of the nineteenth century who attempted this died of consumption brought on by malnutrition.

There is little that needs to be said about Professor Starkie's biography of Cardinal Ximenes. Those who have read his books of peregrination through Romantic Spain will know what to expect. *Juglares* and dancing girls form the initial setting and the Archpriest of Hita is dragged in, a century or so after his death, simply because he was so naughty. Every picturesque and coloured detail that can be lifted from the histories of the period is served up and when they fail Professor Starkie draws deeply on his own imagination. Yet he is well versed in his period and subject. If he could repress some of his Irish exuberance and acquire more of the discipline of an historian, his books would be better worth reading.

I must add that on the title page there is a reproduction of a portrait of the Cardinal from a fresco by Juan de Borgoña in Toledo Cathedral that is really superb. GEORGE BEATON

Small Accounts

By tradition as well as by deliberate policy, the Westminster Bank has always aimed at fostering the 'small' account. Moreover, there is no sharper line of demarcation between 'big' and 'small' than between 'white' and 'black'; there are many greys between, and it has always been good business for the Bank to encourage the smaller account, with confidence in its growth later on.

Those, therefore, who may have felt that their means hardly warrant a banking account are invited to consult the Manager of any branch and to find that their hesitation may have been groundless.

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About Motoring

MAINTAINING A "DURATION" CAR

IN normal times motorists fall into two classes—the owner who exchanges his car every year, and the owner who retains his car almost as long as it remains serviceable. Very few civilian owners in this country will buy another car until peace returns. Whilst no man can foretell the duration of this war, an Allied victory appears improbable at any early date; and whatever car is in use should be treated as if it had to continue in service for three or more years. This principle entails far more painstaking and thoughtful maintenance than the average happy-go-lucky owner normally attempts; and this for two main reasons. The first is operative; though spare parts will continue to be obtainable for all British cars, repairs will become extremely expensive, and skilled repairs may soon be unobtainable. The second is financial. Unless peace finds us little short of bankrupt, cars which survive the war in sound working order will be worth more than they are worth now during the interval which separates peace from the industry's return to production; there may well be moments at which they will command a higher price than their original cost. The pressure upon our industries may become such that the manufacture of cars even for export will cease. Peace may be followed by an interval of perhaps twelve months during which new cars of British make will be unobtainable; for the organisation of mass production is no brief or simple matter, and staffs are so occupied by war work that even design must be postponed. These facts supply two strong motives for taking the utmost care of the "duration" car. So far as actual use now and for a year after the peace is concerned, such care is concentrated on the mechanism. If the owner desires to effect a good sale after the war, care of the coachwork is equally vital.

Care of the mechanism implies meticulous routine in lubrication, including rear axle, gear box, springs and all moving joints as well as of the engine. But special attention should be given to the engine, as the most complex and costly item in the chassis, and especially because its life and condition are menaced by the crude quality of Pool petrol. Unburnt elements in this coarse fuel are liable to adulterate the oil, especially while the engine is warming up. The owner should use none but the best engine lubricant; he should drain the sump at regular intervals, certainly not exceeding 2,000 miles, and preferably at every 1,000 miles; and having drained the sump, he should flush it out with one of the special media marketed for the purpose, and refill it with fresh oil. He should also keep the oil level continuously near the upper limit indicated by his dipstick. Whilst driving the car, he will probably notice that it pinks or detonates when it would continue to run smoothly on pre-war No. 1 spirit; for instance, when he is climbing a long, gentle gradient on top gear, he will reach a point at which he hears the engine knocking slightly. If he does not change down, it will continue to pull, but he should not allow it to pull when it is detonating, but change down to the next lower gear, as such detonation implies illegitimate stresses on piston, bearings and shafts.

The care of coachwork remains laborious in spite of chromium and cellulose enamel, even though it is less tedious than in the past era of nickel and coach varnish. An owner who has little leisure may elect to let his cellulose enamel deteriorate, and have the car sprayed after the peace before resale; but this is an extravagant method, as the cellulose will not suffer from mild neglect provided it is thoroughly cleansed and wax-polished say, once a month. This treatment already costs about 15*s.* for a medium-sized car, if it is performed at a garage; but it can be really well executed by the owner himself in about three hours, which is no great inroad on a month's leisure. Any chauffeur in private service would be disgraced if he allowed the appearance of a car's coachwork to deteriorate seriously in five years; yet such skilled men do not often devote three hours at a spell to the cars in their charge; they know that wax polish saves them a vast amount of elbow grease.

Chromium plating responds most swiftly and gratefully to ordinary soap and water at short intervals; but if it has once been allowed to discolour or pit, prolonged work with a special chemical cleaner is necessary; and genuine or prolonged neglect may render replating essential.

An expensive item commonly neglected by casual motorists is the accumulator. It may cost upwards of £10, and in reckless hands its working life may be no more than twelve months, whilst under regular monthly topping up with distilled water it will always last for two years, and if it is never abused in prolonged or repeated starts of a cold or neglected engine, it has been known to furnish good service for four or five years. R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 543

Set by Peregrine Pickle

Competitors are asked to provide an extract (not more than 20 lines) from *Ode to a Skylark* by Stephen Spender, or *Omar Khayyam* by T. S. Eliot, or *The Isles of Greece* by W. H. Auden, or *Casabianca* by Gerard Manley Hopkins, or *Oh Mistress Mine* by Ezra Pound, or *Tyger, Tyger* by D. H. Lawrence. The usual prizes are offered.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, July 12th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 541

Set by Roderick Random

The suspension of horse racing and greyhound racing has just been announced. A first prize of two guineas and a second of half a guinea are offered for the best paragraph (not exceeding 300 words) of comment on this subject from any one of the following: J. L. Garvin, Timothy Shy, Peter Howard, Patience Strong, Lord Castlerosse, Maurice Healey, the *Times* Leader Writer, *The Week*, William Hickey.

Report by Roderick Random

This competition brought in a large entry, although it was mainly confined to three of the suggested models, Mr. Garvin, Timothy Shy and Patience Strong. The last was, perhaps, a mistake on the setter's part; it tempted many competitors, but it turns out to be almost impossible to guy the Quiet Corner effectively. One cannot parody parody. Ellen Evans, M. G. F. Plant and "Arthur Mac" were the best, but they all, I think, went too deep or too long. The limit of endurance in reading such verse is very quickly reached. The Garvinesque was much better. D. O. Davies, E. H. Bedwell, Noel Archer, Robert Polondine, Bill Weevil competed fiercely, but none of them caught quite the characteristic flights of word play which T. Naisby achieved. Timothy Shy was also very well done; several of the entrants, notably Garlicus, J. C. B. Date, Charles Pugmire, Ronald Phillips and Richard Pomfret might well offer their services if "anything happens to" their original. But it was Charles Furbank who seemed to go the necessary step beyond that. The prizes go, then, the first to T. Naisby, the second to Charles Furbank; but before quoting them I give a selection from the others who were not far behind.

After J. L. Garvin:

It is tragedy, but not irrevocable; a pause, rather than a culmination. Sport is the Englishman's life-blood. Neither for a Philip of Spain nor an Adolf of Berchtesgaden will he yield that heritage. Drake finished his game of bowls before thrashing the Spaniards as they sailed up-channel on their voyage of invasion. We prefer to play the greater Game first. To-day, history is not changed, only reversed. To-day, our hearts steeled, our heads unbowed, we go forth—literally and yet paradoxically—to fight for the Race. (Noel Archer)

After Timothy Shy:

A bookie we know, though not through and through—he being of considerable dimensions—assures us that the end of racing isn't going to lose the profession overmuch sleep.

We gather that most of them are to be taken into sanctuary by the Right Book Club, whose ruling spirits are prepared to wink at the sort of books they make, on the ground that, anyway, their books are in the Right tradition. (Richard Pomfret)

Reminding one that a somewhat similar situation arose during the operations against the real Napoleon, when, egged on by Slogger Bentham, the Government of the day banned cock-fighting, pig-sticking, bull-, bear-, broker- and badger-baiting, gob-walloping, knur-and-spell, duckstone, gander-coursing, beetle-snitching, champerty, sacage and socage, snap, hog-snofting, cow-cadding, gunny-bagging, housie-housie and blank verse (Wild Life (Teasing) Act, 1814 (49 & 50 Geo. III cap. 116 (*a*) (ii) (4)). . . . Interviewed by our representative to-day, Sir Hugh Walpole said that the Lake District is our national heritage and must be preserved. (Charles Pugmire)

The last straw which broke Slogger Junior's back—again B. B. is our informant—was a despatch from Sunny Sam the Skater, supporting the proposals and urging all brother Skaters to rally to the Standard. As a member of the Grand Order of Sloggers and Skaters, Slogger A could only do as he was bid and, despite tearful pleas from xnthxny "Tatlerfaced" xdxn and Colourful Kxngsky "Keep Kapital Komfy" Wxxd, he affixed to the Order his Seal of Dignity, an Average Man Dormant, rendering a Voluntary on his 'ARP. (Garlicus)

After Patience Strong:

I wonder if you've ever put a "bob" upon a horse? Heaps of people do and there's no harm in it, of course. But times are altered now and self-indulgence isn't right; in these dark days we've simply got to pull our belts in tight. (Stanley J. Sharpless)

I had a curious dream last night. I thought dear Spot could talk; he told his doggie thoughts to me when we went for our walk. "I'm glad to be a British dog in these sad days of war. There's work for every dog to do; work for each loyal paw. I'm glad the greyhounds are set free to take their rightful share of honest work; they've found it dull chasing a dummy hare. Now they can play a real dog's part and help the food-supply. (Ellen Evans)

FIRST PRIZE

The Ukase to suspend horse-racing and dog-racing had the clarity of crystal within the contours of good reason. At a time when every activity, by the more-than-iron rules of logic, good sense, and common prudence must be harnessed to the war effort, it is unthinkable—and not to be thought of—that horses should be harnessed for nothing more purposeful than the placings of 1, 2, and 3.

The flutter is now a fritter; the flutterer a fritterer.

To fritter is to lose time and dissipate vitalities. It is a wanton breach in our defences—a shadow across Time, an obliteration of the Future.

Make no mistake about it. This sea girt isle is wrestling for very existence. There is a function for every wither, a billet for every florin that a Totalisator might otherwise swallow and disgorge, a job of work for every jockey, be he ever so light, a post for every punter.

Much mistaken is the view that this land can afford the relaxations of peacetime. As this journal has repeatedly vouchsafed. . . . T. NAISBY

SECOND PRIZE

A sex-mad bookmaker when asked said the suspension of racing meant the suspension of everything. "A world without the little feet of women owners is no world at all for me!" he went on. "He had branches in every important city," our special correspondent added sadly.

The M.C.C. are being very standoff-ish about it all. Bishop Fry pooh-poohed the idea that Lord's might be used to keep some racing going. "We haven't had any hoof marks here since Robert the Devil made that century for the I Zingari in '04," he said. "*Le Diable!*" amended Dolores. The Bishop struck her lightly with a teeny bat. "*Touché!*" she chanted. "Stumped," said the Bishop, urbanely correcting her solecism.

Noel Coward's offer to use the lull to discover the film tastes of jockeys is being looked into by the Jockey Club. An aged member said to-day, "The merry little fellows lead such a kaleidoscopic life they've little use for the cinema." "They also have a healthy contempt for crooners," he added. When asked if he thought that Mr. Coward was a crooner, he replied guardedly that he was a generous foeman whose enmity they could all enjoy.

Ethel Mannin claims to be the first female novelist to win the Derby. She is to be haled before the stewards for this audacity. She was last seen proceeding in their direction with a rapt expression on her face. CHARLES FURBANK

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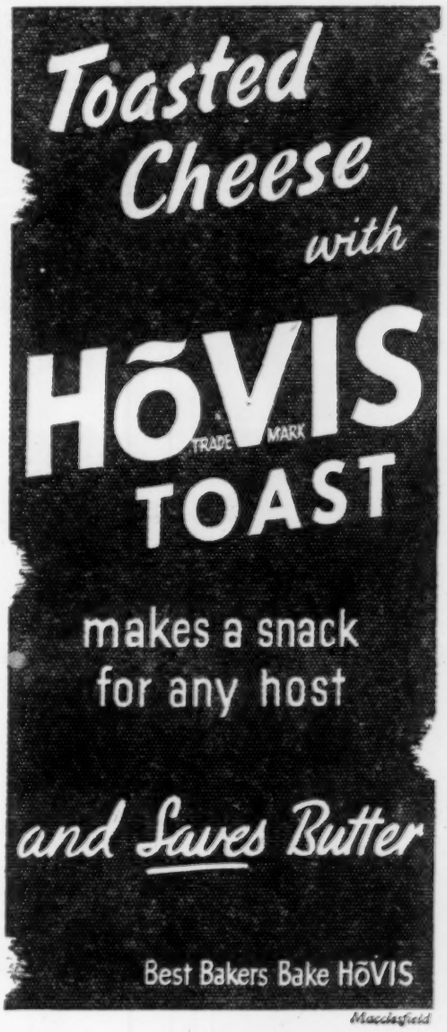

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

SIR KINGSLEY'S SMOKE-SCREEN—THE GOVERNOR, THE BANKS AND THE STOCK EXCHANGE SLUMP

IT is good to know that Mr. J. M. Keynes, as one of the new "Consultative Councillors," can now walk into the Treasury without having to fill in a form and stand in a queue, but no one should suppose that the financial war will be won by the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling upon nine eminent gentlemen to advise him "upon the special problems which confront the Treasury as a consequence of war conditions," even if one of them, Lord Catto, is to be a whole-time "Financial Adviser." Now that we have come to our last ditches—financial as well as military—there is no longer time to appoint committees "to consult and advise": there is just time enough for quick and violent action. But who imagines that action will be taken by a Chancellor of the Exchequer who belongs to what we civilians vulgarly call the "old political gang"? As long as we see even one member of the "old gang" holding the seals of office, and particularly such an important and vital office as the Treasury, we men-in-the-street are fully justified in being suspicious that the financial war will not be prosecuted *à outrance*, and that we run the risk of being betrayed, as Frenchmen were betrayed, by indecisiveness, compromise and moral weakness and cowardice in high places. A Chancellor of the Exchequer who hides behind a smoke-screen of financial advisers when he should be leading a front-line attack against entrenched positions in the old financial world and against out-of-date methods in the Civil Service, is not one who is likely to command our confidence or respect.

* * *

You may ask—why rail against the old political "gang" when the old financial one remains in power. But it is for the Chancellor to make the changes which the hour demands. Last week I referred to the serious slump in ordinary share values which had occurred on the Stock Exchange—depriving the Inland Revenue of millions in Estate Duties—which would never have occurred if the Chairman of the British Insurance Association had not been summoned to the Bank of England by the Governor and asked to instruct his members to hold up the investment of their cash balances pending the issue of a new Government loan. The Governor of the Bank did not appear to know that it was important to make every pound do its fullest possible work on its way eventually to the Treasury chest, and that if the institutional investors used their idle pounds in buying the securities which executors and other private holders had to realise on the Stock Exchange in order to meet the tax demands of the Government they would be helping the Treasury and the Inland Revenue as well as doing themselves a good turn. The Treasury gave no orders to the Governor of the Bank to instruct the insurance companies not to use their idle cash on the Stock Exchange. Yet the evil was done and no one is held accountable. Obviously the financial system is at fault and needs a drastic overhaul. The City should no longer be regarded as an independent papal State, or the Governor as a Pope, but as part of our national fighting front. When the Treasury wishes to convey hints or orders to the financial institutions in the City it should do so directly and not through the instrumentality of an independent, and obscurantist institution.

* * *

I am not suggesting that the Governor of the Bank is alone responsible for the slump in ordinary shares on the Stock Exchange. The joint stock banks which are now supposed to be under Government supervision, if not control, played their part in this debacle. Branch managers, under the instructions of their head offices, have apparently been pestering clients to reduce their overdrafts by selling securities. Where overdrafts have been secured on investments, the bank managers have been asking their clients to put up more cash as the investments have fallen in market value. I have a letter from a reader who writes: "I know of two people with overdrafts (secured on investments) who have been nearly driven out of their minds by the harassing of the banks." This folly must stop. The banks must be told not to accelerate the fall in security values.

* * *

Happily, since I wrote last week, there has been a welcome recovery in ordinary shares on the Stock Exchange, as this table reveals:

	Price a Month Ago	Price June 27th	Present Price	Last Div. %	Gross Div. Yield %
Imperial Tobacco ...	5 ⅛	3½	4 ⅝	23 net	8.5
Imperial Chemical £1	30/-	20/-	24/3	8	6.6
Tube Invests. £1 ...	92/-	60/-	64/9	23.75	7.3
Rolls-Royce £1 ...	4 ⅜	2 ⅛	2¾	20*	7.3
Vickers 10/-	16/3	9/6	13/3	10	7.5

* Interim 5%. Final estimated 15%.

This recovery should be pressed further. I cannot understand why the Treasury have not formed a consortium, either officially or by giving a hint to the Prudential and other rich insurance companies to form it unofficially, to purchase the leading equity shares on the Stock Exchange. As the volume of dealings has fallen to a fantastically low level, it would be easy to bring about a further market recovery if a consortium were to invest, say, £500,000. This is not the time, of course, for speculation, but under Government auspices a consortium for the stabilisation of security values would turn over its profits to the Treasury as and when it re-sold on the rise. But what is the use of discussing new financial methods while the old powers remain in office?

Company Meeting

METAL BOX COMPANY

INCREASED TURNOVER AND PROFITS

MR. F. N. HEPWORTH'S SPEECH

THE nineteenth annual ordinary general meeting of the Metal Box Co., Ltd., was held on Tuesday last in London.

Mr. F. N. Hepworth (the chairman) presided.

The Chairman's review, circulated with the accounts, stated that upon the outbreak of war the emergency plans referred to last year were immediately brought into operation. Their effectiveness had enabled the company to meet the great demands made upon it and to overcome the fresh problems involved. The spirit of the managerial staffs and of employees in factories had been splendid; they had shown themselves willing and anxious to make very real sacrifices in the national interests.

The accounts presented showed not only increased profits but indicated a remarkable expansion in the scope of the company's activities during the year. The first five months of the year fell in the pre-war period and, as a result of previous developments, showed results substantially in advance of the corresponding period of last year, both as regards turnover and profits. The trading profit for the year, after making provision for Excess Profits Tax, was £606,642, an increase of £123,927 on the previous year. Owing to the increased income-tax demand, however, the disposable balance of £303,995 showed a slight reduction. The directors recommended a repetition of last year's final Ordinary dividend of 10 per cent. and a bonus of 2½ per cent., making, with the interim dividend of 5 per cent., 17½ per cent. for the year.

Undistributed profits and reserves of the company and its subsidiaries amounted to £1,687,903, or a little in excess of the issued Ordinary capital. In view of that position the directors had preferred to increase the carry-forward to £117,403 rather than to add further to general reserve.

The increased volume of trade during the year had necessitated the carrying of greatly increased stocks and had brought about a large increase in debtors and balances due from subsidiary companies, and a reduction in amounts due to subsidiary companies. The necessary funds had been provided in part by the issue of ordinary shares in July, 1939, which produced £440,965, by the sale of securities to the extent of £64,400, by Bank and Bill finance which at the date of the Balance Sheet amounted to £371,869.

During the year the company had acquired the whole of the issued share capital of Barringer, Wallis and Manners, Ltd. Various extensions and developments had been completed or were in hand. Present conditions did not permit specific reference to these, connected as they were with the war effort. Similar reasons prevented the giving of information about general activities. Shareholders could be assured that the management felt to the full its responsibility for making the greatest possible contribution to the national effort. Recent Governmental enactments would facilitate that in increasing degree.

The special allocation of £16,500 shown in the Accounts under the heading "Transfer to Superannuation Account" was to enable older employees of Barringer, Wallis and Manners, Ltd., to join the scheme. Including this and earlier payments for other Subsidiary Companies such lump sum payments to cover back service premiums now totalled nearly £100,000. In addition, the annual contribution equivalent to that of the members amounted to approximately £20,000.

The Company was seeking in every way possible to mitigate the strain of war conditions upon employees who were responding so enthusiastically to the exacting demands made upon them.

A.R.P. arrangements for the protection of workpeople and factories were kept under constant review and were as complete as possible. The expense incurred thereon during the year had been written off.

A large number of employees had been called up for active service. In all cases allowances were being made to these men or their dependants. Their payments to the Superannuation Fund were also being maintained so that they retained all the benefits of membership.

The Company had formed a National Savings Group to assist and encourage employees to purchase certificates. Over 16,000 of such certificates had already been applied for under this scheme.

In accordance with the Articles of Association Mr. J. Crabtree, Mr. F. N. Hepworth and Mr. O. C. Huffman were due to retire from the Board. Mr. John Crabtree was not offering himself for re-election.

Mr. Crabtree had played an important part in the formation of Metal Box and Printing Industries, Ltd., in 1921, and he had been a member of the Board ever since. Having worked with Mr. Crabtree all these years, the chairman could speak with knowledge and appreciation of his business ability, his loyalty and his personal charm. He would feel Mr. Crabtree's departure keenly as he and Mr. Crabtree were the only two of the original Board left. It will probably never be known how much the success of the Company in its earlier days was due to Mr. Crabtree's influence among their clients, in his own factory, and on the Board. They would take leave of Mr. Crabtree with very real regret.

This year, more than ever, thanks were due to the staff for their loyal co-operation. Under the able leadership of the Managing Director, Mr. Robert Barlow, the staff had responded willingly to every call made upon them.

The chairman moved the adoption of the report and accounts.

Mr. R. Barlow (vice-chairman and managing director) seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

A final dividend of 10 per cent. (making 15 per cent. for the year) and a bonus of 2½ per cent., less income-tax, on the Ordinary stock, were declared. Mr. F. N. Hepworth and Mr. O. C. Huffman were re-elected directors and Messrs. Hodgson Harris and Co. were reappointed auditors.

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by

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Preface by Lord Snell

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